

**DAŚĀVATĀRA**  
**IN INDIAN CULTURE - IT'S CONTINUITY**  
**IN**  
**THE DAŚĀVATĀRĪ NĀṬAKA OF**  
**MAHARASHTRA**

**A thesis submitted by**  
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**For the Degree of**  
***Vidyāvācaspati* (Ph.D.)**

**In**  
**Classical Dance (Bharatanāṭyam)**

**Guide**  
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**June 2014**

**TILAK MAHARASHTRA VIDYAPEETH, PUNE**  
**SHRI BALMUKUND LOHIA CENTRE OF**  
**SANSKRIT AND INDOLOGICAL STUDIES**

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “DAŚĀVATĀRA IN INDIAN CULTURE - ITS CONTINUITY IN THE DAŚĀVATĀRĪ NĀṬAKA OF MAHARASHTRA” which is being submitted herewith for the award of the Degree of Vidyāvācaspati (Ph.D.) in Dance (Bharatanāṭyam), at Shri. Balmukund Lohiya Centre of Sanskrit and Indological Studies of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune is the result of original research work completed by Smt. Gauri Subhash Kale under my supervision and guidance. To the best of my knowledge and belief the work incorporated in this thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree or similar title of this or any other University or examining body upon her.

Research Guide

Dr. Jayashree Rajagopalan

Place:

Date:

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that thesis entitled “DAŚĀVATĀRA  
IN INDIAN CULTURE – IT’S CONTINUITY IN THE  
DAŚĀVATĀRĪ NĀṬAKA OF MAHARASHTRA”  
completed and written by me has not previously formed the  
basis for the award of any Degree or other similar title upon  
me of this or any other University or examining body.

Research Student

Gauri Kale

Place:

Date:

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Being an active dancer, I had always enjoyed experiencing different thematic productions. My thrill and joy were indeed superlative when I realised that one could experience the flavour of the age old concept of Daśāvatāra through the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

In this thesis an attempt has been made to present, as clearly as possible, the literary, sculptural, pictorial, numismatic, epigraphic and palaeographic evidence which form the basis of identifying the history and evolution of the art form but, would not necessarily, be history itself. Additionally, my focus was on the presentation structure of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama. A more thorough study of the subtle differences of different presentations would be necessary for a micro analysis of all the aspects of the various styles of the Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka.

I hope that a detailed study of the role of Daśāvatāra in Indian Culture and its continuity in Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra as revealed in this thesis will certainly enrich the Indian dance-drama cultural heritage.

No work of this kind (which covers the history of an ancient art form), can be executed without the active guidance, help and cooperation of scholars, Gurus and friends. I am really fortunate to have had such learned people around me whenever I needed their help.

I am very grateful to my Guru Dr. Jayashree Rajagopalan, who guided me most affectionately, with her profound knowledge and experience. I remember very fondly the happy and fruitful hours she spent with me perusing and deciphering the various interpretations offered in the Nāṭyaśāstra and her ever willing enthusiastic support for this work.

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It would not be possible to mention all the scholars, Sanskritists, and dancer friends who have, with their knowledgeable help and sympathetic encouragement, contributed to the process of my research. To each one, I am grateful. Lastly, I wish to thank all the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka artists and scholars with whom I have been able to interact, for willing sharing their knowledge with me. Last but not the least, my sincere thanks to all those who made me realise the true meaning of the word RESEARCH.

## SYNOPSIS

The proposed Doctoral Thesis titled:

DAŚĀVATĀRA IN INDIAN CULTURE - ITS CONTINUITY IN  
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In

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### Introduction

#### 1.1 Purpose of the study

In Indian mythology the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are collectively known as Daśāvatāra. Daśāvatāra dance-drama, a distinct expression under the umbrella 'Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka' enduring over almost four centuries as a ritual pursuit, is a significant contribution that Maharashtra has made towards the panorama of theatre-dance in India.

Daśāvatāra is most popular performing folk art of Maharashtra which has fragrance of the soil and soul of Konkan. Daśāvatāra is also a religious Nṛtya-Nāṭaka portraying the stories of various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu. Originating in the early Vedic literature, the concept of the Daśāvatāra seems to have taken concrete form in the Gupta Period.

The tradition of showing the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu on the stage seems to have been quite an ancient tradition as elucidated by the codification of the Daśāvatāra *hastas* (the hand-gestures for ten incarnations) in Naṇḍikeśvara's Bharatārṇava and Abhinaya Darpaṇa.

The credit of evolving a full-fledged Daśāvatāra dance- drama goes to Konkan and the regions around it. The Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka was introduced to the Konkan region in Maharashtra in the year 1728 C.E.

by a *brāhmaṇa kīrtanakāra*. Developed in the 18 century C.E., the Daśāvatāra plays have influenced the form of Saṅgīta Nāṭakas, combining elements of mimicry, masquerade, and pageantry. The performers of Daśāvatāra were generally inherent actors, all male.

The Daśāvatāra traditional theatre form of Konkan and Goa region is already nominated for the UNESCO's representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India in the Year 2010.

In this research, the efforts have been taken to explore and study the representation of Daśāvatāra in the traditional Indian art forms of painting, sculpture, literature, epigraphy and numismatics; handicrafts such as puppets, printed fabrics, embroidery and also philately. These findings have helped strengthen the study of the history of Daśāvatāra as a Performing Art and its extension in the modern Cinema. The internet parallels of the Daśāvatāra were also sought to get the clear evidence of the subject. At the same time, the objective of this research has been to investigate transforming notions of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama tradition in Maharashtra in general and its uniqueness.

**This research is particularly of the purpose of bringing out the importance of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka tradition in Maharashtra and to showcase its antiquity.**

### **1.2 Field Work-**

It deals purely with the investigation of theatrical performance changes that occurred during the modern age. In order to understand the changes that occurred in theatre realm, emphasis has been given to the changes that occurred culturally through the ages. This work is the outcome of conceptual and art historical research, focusing on the potential of an articulation of the cultural landscape.

### **1.3 Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu**

The scriptures speak of the ten *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu, who protects the earth by incarnating Himself in the different forms and save the Universe. The ten Incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are Matsya, Kūrma,

Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha/Balarāma, Kalki. The *avatāra* stories which are commonly used in the dance- drama presentations are discussed. Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki *avatāras* are not portrayed in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

The scope of this study is extremely vast, wide and varied. The main references are taken from Sanskrit texts.

#### **1.4 Survey of research/ work done in Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka**

##### **[ Daśāvatāra workshops, Book Reviews, Published Articles ]**

There are many scholars, who have studied the Daśāvatāra in different perspective on the basis of different subjects like sculptures, paintings, evolutionary development and Hinduism. The efforts have been made to find out what might have been the reason behind the changes that occurred in the performance structure through the ages and to find out the reasons behind transforming notions in the presentation of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra. This has not been undertaken as a serious study so far, to the best of my knowledge and that is the reason for undertaking an in-depth study on the Daśāvatāra in Indian culture and its continuity in the tradition of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

#### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The scientific, sociological and religious topics are not dealt with in detail due to the limitations of the thesis. Only selective references of Daśāvatāra found in ancient literature and sculpture, could be chosen, at the cost of eliminating several valuable once from our vast wealth of Indian Art-Culture. The stories of Daśāvatāra are not yet proved historically or archeologically. Here, the study of the Daśāvatāra is undertaken from the point of view of the dance-drama culture only. Therefore the main constraint in the study of this topic is that the researcher has to depend on the secondary data such as Sanskrit and other text material, the study conducted by different scholars and the



recent documentation of the live performances and the interviews of Daśāvatārī artists from different troupes.

### **1.6 Aims of the Study**

- Firstly, the objective of the study is to find out the importance of the relationship of Indian culture and the concept of Daśāvatāra, which is frequently used in different Indian art forms from time and again.
- To find out what the philosophers and religious teachers of medieval period wanted to convey to the society through the theory of Daśāvatāra and its impact on the art and culture particularly of Maharashtra region.
- To find out that the concept of Daśāvatāra was set forth for the society as a code of morals with the elements of *bhakti* or just as entertainment.
- Finally, this study focuses to create an awareness of the precious art form, Daśāvatāra of Maharashtra to give a new artistic perspective for the common viewers as an elevated form of entertainment.

### **1.7 The following are the specific objectives of the study:**

- To understand the background of Daśāvatāra performances.
- To know the origin of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performance tradition.
- To study and understand the present day performance of Daśāvatāra.
- To focus the Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka performance structure (folk, traditional, classical).

**In view of the above objectives set for the present study, the data has been collected through an independent method of analysis:**

- Literature survey: Textual sources for Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performance and personal interviews.
- Study of the books, published articles of regional research scholars written in Marathi and English.

- Personal interviews with scholars, artists and technical persons who participated in live performances in the villages.
- Data was collected by personal observation of performances at different locales (locations) on different occasions by interaction with performers and spectators.
- The secondary sources are profusely used, if found authentic, to supplement primary data.
- During this exercise, maximum care has been taken to verify their authenticity for analysis.

### **1.8 The primary data for the present study includes-**

- Documentation of different Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performances.
- Observation of live performances at different places in Konkan region of Maharashtra.
- Collecting literature i.e. books, reference articles related to Daśāvatāra performances by different research scholars.
- A tape recorder was used to record information from the performing troupes.
- A period of 2 to 3 days was spent in each village to interact with different performing troupes.

### **1.9 Methodology**

The efforts have been taken to explore and study the representation of Daśāvatāra in the traditional Indian art forms of painting, sculpture, literature, epigraphy and numismatics; handicrafts such as puppets, printed fabrics, embroidery and also philately. These findings have helped strengthen the study of the history of Daśāvatāra as a Performing Art and its extension in the modern Cinema.

The documentation of the live performances of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka troupes supports the present study which is performance oriented. Since the study in performance is a new area, the preference has been given to the performance analysis method. The secondary sources are profusely used, if found authentic, to supplement primary data, therefore the arguments are enlarged on the basis of available data.

During this exercise, maximum care has been taken to verify their authenticity. On the whole, the current data collected from different sources is used in this appraisal.

➤ **A deeper study of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka tradition.  
(Infrastructure)**

1) Process of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka Performance.

2) Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka presentation.

- Pūrva-raṅga
- Uṭṭara-raṅga

3) Āhārya

- Costume and Ornaments
- Make-up

4) The presentation structure-

- traditional way
- modern presentation

5) Textual sources for performance.

➤ **The description of different features and elements to  
improve the texture of the presentation of Daśāvatārī  
Nāṭaka**

1) Abhinaya aspect (Āṅgika, Vācika and Āhārya).

2) Aspect of Dance (Nṛṭṭa and Nṛṭya).

3) Aspect of Music (Style of music and instruments).

➤ **The process of data collection**

- The primary data for the present study was collected from February 2012 to November 2013. During this period, extensive travel was undertaken to different places in Maharashtra.

Though, Maharashtra has lost its original classical dance or drama tradition today, it certainly has the necessary cultural, musical and literary base for the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. This author as a classical dancer, taking inspiration from the culture of Maharashtra feels

hopeful and has faith that Maharashtra can evolve a new 'dance-drama' mode of traditional Nṛtya-Nāṭaka. As we have seen this happening in Bhāgavata Melā of Tamil Nadu and Yakṣagāna of Karnataka, the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka can be moulded for the future presentation to the status of receiving official recognition as a classical theatre form of Maharashtra and thus enrich the great art traditions of this land.

The research data is presented in three different parts consisting of several topics.

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## **PLATE- 26**

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Figs. 1 to 4

## **PLATE- 27**

Personal interviews with scholars and artists, technical persons who participated in live performances of Daśāvatāra

## **PLATE- 28**

Daśāvatāra workshop by Dr. Tulasi Behere

## **PLATE- 29 to 32**

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## **PLATE- 33 and 34**

- Daśāvatāra by Kotkamate troupe (Theme: *Kālikā jāñma*, Date: 09-02-2012)

## **PLATE- 35 to 38**

- Daśāvatāra by Siddhi Vināyaka troupe (Theme: *Garuḍa Jāñma*, Date: 06-03-2012)

## **PLATE- 39 and 40**

- Daśāvatāra by Moreshwar Daśāvatārī troupe (Theme: *Tulasīche Pāna*, Date: 09-03-2013)

## **PLATE- 41 and 42**

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- Daśāvatāra by Kuveshi troupe (Theme: *Matsya, Narasimha, Paraśurāma, Rāma*, Date: 23-11-1993)

## **MAPS**

**Fig. 1 India – Bhārata Varśa 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Map)**

**Fig. 2 Maharashtra**

**Fig. 3 Konkan**

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>App.</i>	<i>Appendix</i>
<i>anon.</i>	<i>anonymous</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Agni Purāṇa</i>
<i>B.C.E.</i>	<i>Before Common era</i>
<i>BP</i>	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>
<i>c.</i>	<i>copyright</i>
<i>C.E.</i>	<i>Common Era</i>
<i>cent.</i>	<i>century</i>
<i>Cf.</i>	<i>confer</i>
<i>ch</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
<i>circa.</i>	<i>'about'</i>
<i>Cul Hi</i>	<i>Cultural History</i>
<i>d.</i>	<i>death</i>
<i>Dict.</i>	<i>Dictionary</i>
<i>e.g.</i>	<i>for example</i>
<i>Ed.</i>	<i>editor[s]</i>
<i>edn.</i>	<i>edition</i>
<i>Ency.</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia</i>
<i>et al</i>	<i>and others</i>
<i>etc.</i>	<i>extras</i>
<i>ex</i>	<i>example</i>
<i>f. ff.</i>	<i>according to following</i>
<i>fn</i>	<i>foot note</i>
<i>G.</i>	<i>Gāthā</i>
<i>GP</i>	<i>Garūḍa Purāṇa</i>
<i>Hist. Geo.</i>	<i>Historical Geography of Ancient India</i>
<i>i.e.</i>	<i>it explains</i>
<i>Ibid</i>	<i>on the same place</i>
<i>intr.</i>	<i>Introduction</i>
<i>l. ll.</i>	<i>line[s]</i>

<i>Loc. Cit</i>	<i>located at</i>
<i>Mp</i>	<i>Map</i>
<i>MBh</i>	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Matsya Purāṇa</i>
<i>MS / MSS</i>	<i>Manuscript</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>M.Monier-Williams</i>
<i>n. d.</i>	<i>no date</i>
<i>n. p.</i>	<i>no place of publication</i>
<i>N.B.</i>	<i>nota bene</i>
<i>NMS</i>	<i>Nāṭya-Mañjiri-Saurabham</i>
<i>NN</i>	<i>Nartananirṇaya</i>
<i>No. Nos.</i>	<i>Number[s]</i>
<i>NŚ</i>	<i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i>
<i>Op. Cit</i>	<i>recently cited work</i>
<i>pict</i>	<i>picture[s]</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Plates</i>
<i>PP. / pp.</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
<i>Pub. Pubs</i>	<i>Publisher/ Publications</i>
<i>q.v.</i>	<i>'which see'</i>
<i>resp.</i>	<i>respectively</i>
<i>rpt.</i>	<i>Reprint</i>
<i>s. v.</i>	<i>under the title</i>
<i>Sa.Eng.</i>	<i>Sanskrit English</i>
<i>sic.</i>	<i>'thus, so'</i>
<i>st. Sts.</i>	<i>paragraphs</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>typed script</i>
<i>v. vv.</i>	<i>verse</i>
<i>vide</i>	<i>see</i>
<i>viz.</i>	<i>Naming</i>
<i>Vol.</i>	<i>Volume[s]</i>
<i>vs.</i>	<i>verses</i>
<i>WEB</i>	<i>The World Book of Encyclopaedia</i>



## DIACRITICAL MARKS

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	r̄	r̄̄	l̄	l̄̄
ए	ऐ	ओ	औ		अनुस्वार			विसर्ग	
ē	ai	o	au		m̄ or ṃ			ḥ	
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ					
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ					
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ					
c	ch	j	jh	ñ					
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण					
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ					
त	थ	द	ध	न					
t	th	d	dh	n					
प	फ	ब	भ	म					
p	ph	b	bh	m					
य	र	ल	ळ	व	श	ष	स	ह	
y	r	l	ḷ	v	ś	ṣ	s	h	

# CHAPTER-1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

Indian dances and music are world-renowned. It serves merely not as a medium of entertainment but it is a powerful medium to feel and express human emotions.

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capability acquired by man as a member of society. An important feature of Indian culture is its deep sense of continuity.

Maharashtra is a store house of variegated traditions of artistic dance and music. The evidence like literature, sculpture, inscriptions, etc. reveals that the antiquity of such dance and music goes back to the time of Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra (200BCE to 200CE). In Maharashtra we do not have any living tradition of a classical dance developed in the local environment, "Dance and Music were a part of the everyday life of the people in medieval Maharashtra and the music and dance were performed according to the old texts"<sup>1</sup>. The latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Maharashtra had to bear the brunt of the direct onslaught of the foreign invasions. In Maharashtra the first opposition to the Islamic invasion came in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, under the command of Shivaji Mahārāj. The old forms of devotional plays like Daśāvatāra, Jāgara, Laḷita, and Goṇḍhaḷa continued to be performed uninterrupted as a part of the temple festivals. Goa at the extreme south of Maharashtra also offered shelter to Nāṭya traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Bhide Sucheta, "Nāṭya Tradition in Maharashtra", *Dances of India*, Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India, Issue- June 2010, As reported in <http://prakashan.vivekanandakendra.org/> PP.184

In Indian mythology the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are collectively known as Daśāvatāra. Daśāvatāra Dance-drama, a distinct expression under the umbrella 'Daśāvatārī Nṛtya-Nāṭaka' enduring over almost four centuries as a ritual pursuit, is a significant contribution that Maharashtra has made towards the panorama of theatre-dance in India.

Daśāvatāra is most popular performing folk art of Maharashtra which has fragrance of the soil and soul of Konkan. Daśāvatāra is also a religious Nṛtya-Nāṭaka portraying the stories of various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu. Originating in the early Vedic literature, the concept of the Daśāvatāra seems to have taken concrete form in the Gupta Period.

The tradition of showing the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu on the stage seems to have been quite an ancient tradition as elucidated by the codification of the Daśāvatāra *hastas* (the hand-gestures for ten incarnations) in Naṇḍikeśvara's Bharatārṇava and Abhinaya Darpaṇam.

The credit of evolving a full-fledged Daśāvatāra dance- drama goes to Konkan and the regions around it. Some people believe that this dance- drama has evolved from Yakṣagāna, while others consider it, to have emerged from Bhāgavata-Mela Nāṭakas. Many actors believe that Daśāvatāra is originally a dance form of Kerala and they worship a deity of the Wālāval region in Kerala. Whatever the source maybe, the form was introduced to the Konkan region in Maharashtra in the year 1728 C.E. by a *brāhmaṇa kīrtanakāra*. Developed in the 18 century C.E., the Daśāvatāra plays have influenced the form of Saṅgīta Nāṭakas, combining elements of mimicry, masquerade, and pageantry. The performers of Daśāvatāra were generally inherent actors, all male.

In this research, the efforts have been taken to explore and study the representation of Daśāvatāra in the traditional Indian art forms of painting, sculpture, literature, epigraphy and numismatics; handicrafts

such as puppets, printed fabrics, embroidery and also philately. These findings have helped strengthen the study of the history of Daśāvatāra as a Performing Art and its extension in the modern Cinema. The books based on social history, heritage and folklore were also studied. The internet parallels of the Daśāvatāra were also sought to get the clear evidence of the subject. At the same time, the objective of this research has been to investigate transforming notions of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama in general and its uniqueness.

**This research is particularly of the purpose of bringing out the importance of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama culture in Maharashtra and to showcase its antiquity.**

#### **Field Work-**

It deals purely with the investigation of theatrical performance changes that occurred during the modern age. In order to understand the changes that occurred in theatre realm, emphasis has been given to the changes that occurred culturally through the ages.

This work is the outcome of conceptual and art historical research, focusing on the potential of an articulation of the cultural landscape.

## **1.2 Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu**

The scriptures speak of the ten *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu, who protects the earth by incarnating Himself in the different forms and save the Universe. That means the *avatāra* is meant to establish *dharma* and to save the mankind.

#### **The ten Incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu:**

1. Matsya
2. Kūrma
3. Varāha
4. Narasiṁha
5. Vāmana
6. Paraśurāma

7. Rāma
8. Kṛṣṇa
9. Buddha/ Balarāma
10. Kalki

Buddha is sometimes mentioned as the ninth incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu but this is a much later addition in many versions of the mythology. Balarāma is considered as one of the Daśāvatāra in South Indian traditions, and Buddha is not considered as part of this list. In Maharashtra and Goa, Viṭhobā's image replaces the traditional representation of Kṛṣṇa. The Kalki *avatāra* is the last incarnation and He is yet to appear.

### 1.3 Scope of study in ancient literature

Purāṇas are related to the *avatāra* of Lord Mahāviṣṇu. To punish the demons and to save the universe, time and again Lord Viṣṇu incarnates himself in the various *avatāra*. God takes three kinds of incarnations such as *avatāra*, *āveśa* and *aṁśa*. That which has power only for the time being is *āveśa*; the partial incarnation is *aṁśāvatāra* and that which has full power is called *avatāra*. The incarnations of Viṣṇu are countless. They were assumed by the Lord for saving the world and for the restoration of ideals and morals among mankind.<sup>2</sup>

The list of the Daśāvatāra of Mahāviṣṇu is included in the Garuda Purāṇa<sup>3</sup> (1.86.10-11) and denotes those Purāṇa *avatāras*, most prominent in terms of their influence on human society.

The ten *avatāra* are categorised as '*līlā-avatāra*'. The first four *avatāra* appeared in the Satya Yuga. The next three *avatāra* appeared in the Tretā Yuga, the eighth incarnation in the Dwāpāra Yuga and the

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<sup>2</sup> Kalyana magazine: *Avatāra Kathānaka*-“Avatar ki sarthakata aur uska rahasya”, Geeta press Gorakhpur, 2007, First edition, PP.67-68.

<sup>3</sup> *Garūḍa Purāṇa*, Dutta M.N., Cosmo Publications, (1908), New Delhi.

ninth Buddha in the Kali Yuga. The tenth is predicted to appear at the end of the Kali Yuga. Also according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Kali-yuga will end with the manifestation of Kalki-*avatāra* and will establish a new Satya Yuga.

- Matsya *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of a Fish.
- Kūrma, *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of a Tortoise.
- Varāha *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of a wild Boar.
- Narasimha *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared in a Man-Lion form.
- Vāmana *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared in a Dwarf form.
- Paraśurāma *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appears as a man with an axe.
- Rāma *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared as a prince of Ayodhyā.
- Kṛṣṇa *avatāra*- Lord Viṣṇu appeared as a Cowherd.
- Kalk *avatāra* is expected to appear in the Kali Yuga.

Adoption of Buddha as one of the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu under Bhāgavatism is believed to be crystallized during the Gupta period 330-550 C.E. Thus Mahāyāna Buddhism is sometimes called Buddha-Bhāgavatism<sup>4</sup>. It is commonly accepted that the concept of the ten *avatāra* of Viṣṇu was fully developed by this time.

The evolution of historical Viṣṇuism produced what is now a complex system of Vaiṣṇavism, which involves the worship of Lord Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa which is developed by the time of Bhagavat Gītā (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E to 3rd c. C.E.).

Twelve Alvārs are saints of South India, who spread this system of Vaiṣṇavism with their devotional hymns. They did not list the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu (i.e. Anḍāl), nor did they mention Kṛṣṇa to be an *avatāra*.

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<sup>4</sup> As reported in <http://screeninggod.blogspot.com/2012/05/information-collection-dasavatar>

Their poems in praise of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa in Tamil language are collectively known as Nālayira Divya Prabandha.

From all this it would be clear that the concept of Daśāvatāra occupies an important place in the *purāṇic* literature and also plays an important role in the study of ancient culture from several points of view.

The scope of this study is extremely vast, wide and varied. The main references are taken from Sanskrit texts. The stories of Daśāvatāra can be interpreted differently. Similarly, there might be more than one perspective behind every classic work.

#### **1.4 Daśāvatāra as a religious theme for the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra**

Lord Viṣṇu manifested himself in various incarnations, called *avatāra*. The Ten incarnations of Viṣṇu i.e. Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu are very popular and these are the important topics for the Indian Cultural Art forms. As we know that the stories of Daśāvatāra can be interpreted differently, the *avatāra* stories which are commonly used in the dance-drama presentations are discussed here.

- **Matsya**, The Fish form is the first incarnation of Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu took the form of a fish and slayed the demon Śaṅkhāsura. He also saved the Vedas, and the king Satyavrata from the deluge. This incarnation was taken by the Lord to preserve life and religion for the next cycle of Creation. This *avatāra* is presented in the first part of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.
- **Kūrma**, The turtle form is the second incarnation of Viṣṇu. Once in order to get the nectar, the *devas* and the *asūras* started churning the ocean and they used the mount Mandāra as the churning staff. The mount Mandāra suddenly started to sink and

at that time Lord Viṣṇu took the form of a huge turtle and took the weight of the mountain on His back. This incarnation is not portrayed in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka.

- **Varāha**, the wild Boar incarnation is the third incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. He appeared in order to defeat a demon Hiraṇyākṣa, who had abducted the Earth (Bhūmidevī) and carried it to the bottom of the cosmic ocean. The battle between Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa is believed to have lasted for many years, which the former finally won. Varāha saved the Earth from the demon Hiraṇyākṣa and restored it to its place. The story of Varāha *avatāra* is very interesting and generally portrayed in many other dance-drama forms. In Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka this incarnation is explained by Sūtradhāra.
- **Narasimha**, The Man-Lion form is the fourth incarnation of Viṣṇu. When the demon Hiraṇyakaśyapu acquired a boon from Brahma, which gave him inordinate power, Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of man-lion, having a human-like torso and a lower body, but with a lion face and claws. Hiraṇyakaśyapu could not be killed by human, *deva* or an animal, Narasimha is neither one of these, as he is a form of Viṣṇu incarnate as a part-human and part-animal. Narasimha appears from the *stambha*, when it is *saṅdhikālam* (neither day nor night) on the threshold of a courtyard of the palace, and kills the demon with his sharp nails.
- **Vāmana**, once king Bali, through his penance defeated Indra, and humbled other gods. He ruled over the three worlds. All the gods went to Lord Viṣṇu and asked for the protection. Lord Viṣṇu in the form of Vāmana appeared before king Bali when he was making a great religious offering. Bali was extremely pleased and promised to grant the boon of three tiny steps. Vāmana stepped over heaven in the first stride and the earth in the second stride. Viṣṇu asked Bali to indicate where he should



place his third step; but Bali was unable to reply. He replied that he had no intentions of deceiving Lord Viṣṇu and that Viṣṇu can place His third step on his head. This episode is also not shown in the traditional Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

- **Paraśurāma**, a Brāhmin, the sixth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, is the son of Jamadagni and Reṇuka. He received an axe after undertaking a penance and by pleasing Śiva. Paraśurāma is said to be a "Brahma-Kṣatriya" (with the duties between a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya). One day when a king Kārtavīrya Arjuna (Sahasrārjuna-purportedly with a thousand arms) and his army was out hunting, they chanced to visit the hermitage of Jamadagni, a Brāhmaṇa sage, who was able to offer plenty of food to Arjuna and his army with his divine cow Kāmadhenu. Discovering that Kāmadhenu had been the reason for Jamadagni's wealth, Arjuna carried off the cow and took it back with him to his capital. He also devastated the *āshrama*. At the time of this incident Paraśurāma had been absent from the *āshrama*, but when he returned back he was furious and set out to attack the king. Paraśurāma killed the king's entire army and, also killed the king with his axe. As revenge, Paraśurāma killed all the sons of Sahasrārjuna. This episode is presented in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka and the actions highlight Paraśurāma's warrior characteristics.
- **Rāma**, is a hero of the epic Rāmayaṇa and is known as an ideal King of Ayodhyā. Rāma defeated and killed the demon king Rāvaṇa. The battle between Lord Rāma and the king of Lanka is one of the most important parts of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. Which is generally the last episode enacted on the last day of the performance. This episode ends when Sītā offers a garland to Rāma.
- **Kṛṣṇa** is included as the ninth *avatāra* in some versions of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭakas. Lord Kṛṣṇa is among the most commonly

worshipped deities in the Hindu faith. He is an important character in the epic Mahābhārata. He is also known for his bravery in destroying evil powers throughout his life. Kṛṣṇa is usually depicted with the flute (*muralī*) in His hands. Kṛṣṇa is portrayed in the Tamaśā performance while performing the *gaulaṅ* dance. In Daśāvatāri Nāṭaka of Konkan, Kṛṣṇa *avatāra* is generally not portrayed but the *uttara-raṅga* part has Kṛṣṇāvatāra story in the *dahikālā* or Jatrā performance.

Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki *avatāras* are not portrayed in the Daśāvatāri Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

## 1.5 Survey of research/ work done in Daśāvatāri Nāṭaka

### 1.5.1 Daśāvatāra workshops:

- A workshop was organized in Lok-Kalā Academy from 21st to 23rd March 2007. The workshop was successfully conducted by Bhau Desai of Malavani tradition (*dhaikālā*) and his three group members who are renowned traditional Daśāvatāri artists. Students showed their keen interest in warrior dance, traditional costumes and make-up<sup>5</sup>.
- Another workshop organized by University of Pune, Lalit Kala Kendra, in October 2013, to discuss about the guidelines of Daśāvatāra Dance-Drama. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Tulasi Behere of Malavani tradition (*dhaikālā*) and his group members. Several senior and junior students of Drama participated in the Workshop and expressed keen interest to know about musical structure, costumes and make-up.

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<sup>5</sup> As reported in <http://www.mu.ac.in/arts/finearts/lokkala/>

### 1.5.2 Research oriented studies (unpublished documents/ research work)

- Mr. Chintamani T. Khanolkar, a prolific Marathi novelist, short story writer and playwright, wrote under the pen name Arati Prabhu, and gave a new dimension and vigour to the Marathi theatre. Khanolkar worked intensively to study the traditions of Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka of South Konkan and later worked on the folk literature of Konkan region<sup>6</sup>. In order to study the foundations of the Daśāvatāra folk form, Mr. Khanolkar toured the districts of South Ratnagiri and watched Daśāvatāra performances for the purpose of recording and scripting. He interviewed the artists and made a study of their costumes, instruments, and their music and carefully documented his observations.
- Dr. Pramod Kale, a Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindi Scholar, specialised in the field of Indian drama and made two short films in colour - 'Khele' and 'Folk Performances in Pinguli' and has published books on drama and the theatre. He focused on the research into "the process of culture change as evidenced in the interaction between the traditional cultural forms on the mass media in an Indian state". The Fellowship (Homi Bhabha Fellowship 1972-74) project enabled Dr. Kale to return to his field of specialisation - theatre research on traditional village performance in Maharashtra. Dr. Kale visited Universities of Bombay and Pune for obtaining unpublished manuscripts of some of the traditional plays-scripts of the Daśāvatāra and *vagi*<sup>7</sup>. He toured places like Jawhar, Alamsar, Daman and Goa and interviewed practitioners in the field of traditional theatrical folk forms, particularly the three popular and

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<sup>6</sup> As reported in [peep/.com/people/aarti-prabhu](http://peep/.com/people/aarti-prabhu)

<sup>7</sup> As reported in [www.tuugo.in/companies/](http://www.tuugo.in/companies/)

widespread folk forms of Maharashtra, namely the Tamāsā, the Thākar and the Kheḷe from various localities in Ratnagiri district.

- A senior scholar and researcher Mr. Vijay Fatarpekar has studied the traditional dance- drama Yakṣagāna from a senior guru and scholar Dr. Shivarama Karanth. He worked on the presentation of Rājā Sarfoji's dance-drama compositions from the book '*Korvyāce sāhityāce jinnasa*', which was written around 1800 c. C.E. While working on the technical aspects he tried to use mixture of the Yakṣagāna and Daśāvatāra presentation structure for the said dance-drama<sup>8</sup>. He also worked with Nāik Mochemadkar Daśāvatāra troupe and presented some standard *nāṭakas*. He strongly believes in the flavor of the folk culture which is the beauty of the Daśāvatārī *nāṭakas* of Maharashtra.

- **Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu: History, Concept and Social Perspective** by Hazarika Paporī

Ms. Hazarika Paporī submitted her M. Phil dissertation<sup>9</sup> to Nehru institute of Social Sciences, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. In this thesis only the social perspective behind the idea of incarnation is taken into consideration and Daśāvatāra concept is considered as the basis of the study. The author has taken efforts to study the purpose and importance of the social perspectives of Daśāvatāra and to see how it would benefit the human race of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- '*Daśāvatāra Nṛtya va Śilpa*' by Vidula Pharate

Vidula Pharate submitted her M.A. Indology dissertation thesis (Nov.-Dec. 2011) to Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. In this

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<sup>8</sup> Phatarpekar Vijaykumar, Karant Yakshagan Aani Dashavatara, *Mauj Diwali*, 2010, Mauj Publication, Khatav Vadi, Girgao, Mumbai. PP. 87

<sup>9</sup> Paporī Hazarika: (1998-2000) *Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu: History, Concept and Social Perspective*, M.Phil. Dissertation, Nehru Institute of Social Sciences, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune-411037

thesis Daśāvatāra concept is considered as the basis of the study. Here, she has taken efforts to study some Daśāvatāra sculptures through the classical dance perspective. The author has taken into consideration only the hand gestures used in the Kathak dance style and has tried to relate some *sthānakas* also from Abhinayadarpaṇam and Saṅgīta Ratnākara.

- ‘*Kokanācyā Daśāvatārī Nāṭakāci Śmhitā va Prayoga āṇi Karnatakātila Yakṣagāna Nāṭaka yāncā tulanātmaka abhyāsa*’ by Dr. Tulsi Behere

Dr. Tulasi Behere submitted his Ph.D. thesis to the University of Mumbai. This is most elaborated research work which covered the existing tradition of Malvani Daśāvatārī (*dhaikālā*) dance- drama tradition in Maharashtra and also the comparison of the Yakṣagāna and Daśāvatāra both together. It covers several details of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka (*dhaikālā*), details such as the repertoire and the technical structure etc.

Dr. Tulasi Behere claims that

- The Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka or Dahikālā has a specific style of presentation.
- It is a form of Vidhīnāṭya. Daśāvatāra is one of the religious drama forms of south Konkan, Maharashtra.
- In Daśāvatārī dance-drama as the name indicates, all the ten *avatāra* are brought on the stage one after another and the episodes connected with the major incarnations are presented elaborately.
- The credit of Daśāvatārī Nāṭya presentation and tradition has to be given to the Gore *bandhu* and group of Walaval and not to Shyamji Nāik Kale.
- The tradition of staging Daśāvatārī Nāṭya and the antiquity of such drama and music goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and

the structure of this dance-drama form is totally different from the structure of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭya of Shyamji Nāik Kale.

- Daśāvatārī *petārā* has a religious importance and is a symbolic representation of the traditional cultural values of the Konkan region.
- He has explained the religious importance of Daśāvatārī drama.

- “Vividha Bhāsetīla Daśāvatāra racanānce saṅkalana wa racanākārāñcyā dr̥ṭikonātuna saṅkalpanevaril vivecana” by Gauri Kale

Gauri Kale submitted her M.A. dissertation thesis to Shri Balamukund Lohia Center of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. (June-2010) The concept of Daśāvatāra is considered as the basis of this study. In this thesis the popularity of different compositions based on Daśāvatāra theme has taken into consideration. The author has taken efforts to study and collect the Daśāvatāra compositions in different Indian languages and to see how it would benefit the classical dance students.

### 1.5.3 Book Reviews-

Here, some book reviews of scholars and some articles found on the Daśāvatāra dance- drama are given.

#### 1. Seven Secrets of Vishnu by Devdutt Pattanaik

Mr. Devdutt Pattanaik has compiled different stories related to Viṣṇu and Daśāvatāra. He also describes different symbols and rituals related to the Daśāvatāra. The author states that the stories of Viṣṇu communicate the Hindu worldview from the point of view of the householder.

## 2. Darwinian Daśāvatāras by Vinod M.K.

Mr. Vinod has mentioned the scientific view of Daśāvatāra in his article 'Darwinian Daśāvatāra'. He states that the Daśāvatāra seem to have given us the theory of Evolution. He has shown the gradual development of Daśāvatāra in relation to the evolutionary developments of animal kingdom.

## 3. Gulāngiri by Jyotirāo Phule

Jyotirāo Phule, 'Slavery' (Translated by Barrister P. G. Patil)

Here, Jyotirāo's views about Daśāvatāra, their origins and the stories with his own interpretation are expressed. The book has been divided into sixteen parts and it is in a Ballad format with three *abhaṅgas*. It is titled "Brahma, Āryalok".

According to him all these stories have taken place one after the other but he does not provide a chronological sequence of the same.

## 4. Vidhināṭya-Bhaktināṭya Bhaṅḍār-Bukā by Dr. Prakash Khandge

The author has discussed the topics related to *vidhi-nāṭya* and *bhakti-nāṭya* of Maharashtra. He has taken efforts to throw some new light on the traditional knowledge of rules and regulations related to practices of Daśāvatāra dance-drama. In this book the author intends to highlight the devotional aspect of different Maharāṣṭrian traditional dance and dance-dramas. While narrating these regional variations, Dr. Prakash Khandge succeeds in finding the similarities in structure and form of the traditional performing art.

He says, “भागवत मेळे, यक्षगान, लळीत, दशावतार, चित्रकथी, बाहुल्या या सर्व भक्तिसंप्रदायी कथनशैली असून चित्रकथीत कागदावरील चित्रांद्वारे, बाहुल्यांद्वारे अथवा अन्य भक्तिनाट्य परंपरांमध्ये सोंगे, मुखवटे यांद्वारे नाट्य उभे राहते.”

Dr. Prakash Khandge opines that the traditional *pūrvaraṅga* part of the Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka which portrays Matsyāvatāra and Śaṅkhāsura is now performed only in the ritual temple presentations. It has become more entertaining. This statement of the author is valuable and helpful guideline for the present research.

Interestingly Dr. Tara Bhavalkar in her book '*Yakṣagāna āni Marāṭhi nāṭya paramparā*' has stated that Shyamji Nāik Kale, first staged Daśāvatāra play at Adivare village in 1728C.E. he brought this Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka from Karnataka as a source of the '*Dhārmika vidhī*' (religious worship). She further states that Shyamji Nāik accepted this *Vrata* (vow) and brought the *Petārā* to Maharashtra. This is the *Prasādāca Petārā* of Konkan Daśāvatārī *maṇḍali* which belongs to the Walavalkar (Devali) group<sup>10</sup>.

#### 5. Lokanāṭyāci Paramparā by V.K. Joshi

This book includes detail information about the repertoire, and the technical structure of the folk dances and dramas of Maharashtra. It is really elaborate in the sense that it covers several details of the different folk- forms of Maharashtra.

Here, the author has described in brief the different folk- forms of Maharashtra including Daśāvatāra. V.K. Joshi has taken efforts for an intensive work and critical study of the data related to the traditional Daśāvatāra dance-drama. He has commented on some important points like general structure of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka, Presentation, History, and the script of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Goa and south Konkan region, Gauḷaṅkālā etc. While commenting on the development of the regional dance-drama forms and the emergence of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama, he has mentioned the Dance-Drama culture prevalent in the times of Rāmdāsa. Thereafter, V. K. Joshi states that the Daśāvatāra dance-

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<sup>10</sup> Prakash Khandge, Vidhināṭya-Bhaktināṭya Bhaṇḍār-Bukā, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2012, Publisher: Maitreya prakashan, Vile-Parle (east), Mumbai-57. PP. 153.



drama never received “that much attention” in Maharashtra after Rāmadāsa. According to V.K. Joshi, the exact period, of the original dance-drama cannot be specified.

**6. Marathi Rṅgabhūmīchā Itihāsa** by Yashavant Gangadhar Lele

The author has taken efforts to study the origin and history of the Marathi drama. He has mentioned the themes of some Tanjavur Daśāvatārī Bhāgvata Dramas. In first part of the book he has explained the tradition of Marathi drama and culture in detail and also described the themes and stories of different dramas.

**7. Lokagaṅgā** by Sadananda Rane

In this book the author discusses different folk- cultural forms of Maharashtra. In this book the author does not give a systematic explanation about the devotional nature of the Daśāvatārī dance-drama tradition (*dhaikālā*), but he refers to the Malvani traditional style (*dhaikālā*) of presentation and gives details of the present day performance structure in his work.

• **Published Articles**

1] ‘*Dakṣiṇa Kokanacā Daśāvatāra*’ by Sawant Vasanta, Nadabrahma edited by Sarojini Babar, Published by Maharashtra Government Press, 1995, first edition.

2] ‘*Daśāvatāra*’ by Mandavakar *Bhau*, Nadabrahma edited by Sarojini Babar, Published by Maharashtra Government Press, 1995, first edition.

3] ‘*Karant Yakṣagāna āṇi Daśāvatāra*’ by Phatarpekar Vijayakumar, Mauja Diwali Edition, 2010.

4] ‘*Kokaṇātil Daśāvatārī- Khela urfa ādya Marathi Raṅgabhūmi*’ by Jadhav Lakshmanarao. (59<sup>th</sup> Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Nāṭya

Sammelana, Sawantawadi, Published by Sāhitya Saṁśodhan Maṅdal, Indur.) December, 1978.

5] '*Malavani Mulukhātīla Dahikālyācyā Āṭhavaṇi*' by Athalekar Harihar, Tarun Bharat, Belgao, 1983.

6] '**When the Gods Get on to the Stage, Daśāvatāra**' by Bapat Ashutosh, Maharashtra Unlimited Vol.2, Oct.-Dec. 2013.

The traditional drama forms, though, keep changing from region to region. We do find some common links and influences between one another. There are many scholars, who have studied the Daśāvatāra in different views on the basis of different subjects like sculptures, paintings, evolutionary development and Hinduism. Some have studied the regional manifestations of typically Indian dance- drama culture and the Daśāvatāra dance-drama of Maharashtra. While tracing the antecedents of this glorious tradition, the efforts have been made to find out what might have been the reason behind the changes that occurred in the performance through the ages. No one has tried to find out the reasons, behind transforming notions in the presentation of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. That is the reason for undertaking an in-depth study on the Daśāvatāra in Indian culture and its continuity in the tradition of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra. Here, efforts are taken to investigate different styles and the uniqueness of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

## 1.6 Limitations of the Study

Here the study of the Daśāvatāra is undertaken from the point of view of the dance-drama culture only. So the scientific, sociological and religious topics are not dealt with in detail due to the limitations of the thesis. Only selective references of Daśāvatāra found in ancient literature and sculpture, could be chosen, at the cost of eliminating several valuable ones from our vast wealth of Indian Art-Culture.

The stories of Daśāvatāra are not yet proved historically or archeologically. Therefore the main constraint in the study of this topic is that the researcher has to depend on the secondary data such as Sanskrit and other text material, the study conducted by different scholars and the recent documentation of the live performances and the interviews of Daśāvatārī artists from different troupes.

## 1.7 Aims of the Study

- Firstly, the objective of the study is to find out the importance of the relationship of Indian culture and the concept of Daśāvatāra, which is frequently used in different Indian art forms from time and again.
- To find out what the philosophers and religious teachers of medieval period wanted to convey to the society through the theory of Daśāvatāra and its impact on the art and culture particularly of Maharashtra region.
- To find out that the concept of Daśāvatāra was set forth for the society as a code of morals with the elements of *bhakti* or just as entertainment.
- Finally, this study focuses to create an awareness of the precious art form, Daśāvatāra of Maharashtra to give a new artistic perspective for the common viewers as an elevated form of entertainment.

## **1.8 Objectives**

**The present investigation is an attempt to understand the present day Daśāvatāra dance- drama tradition in Maharashtra.**

### **1.8.1 The following are the specific objectives of the study:**

- To understand the background of Daśāvatāra performances.
- To know the origin of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performance tradition.
- To study and understand the present day performance of Daśāvatāra.
- To focus the Daśāvatāra Dance-drama performance structure (folk, traditional, classical).

### **1.8.2 In view of the above objectives set for the present study, the data has been collected through an independent method of analysis:**

- Literature survey: Textual sources for Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performance and personal interviews.
- Study of the books, published articles of regional research scholars written in Marathi and English for Daśāvatāra performances.
- Personal interviews with scholars, artists and technical persons who participated in live performances in the villages.
- Data was collected by personal observation of performances at different locales (locations) on different occasions by interaction with performers and spectators.
- The secondary sources are profusely used, if found authentic, to supplement primary data.
- During this exercise, maximum care has been taken to verify their authenticity for analysis.

### **1.8.3 The primary data for the present study includes-**

- Documentation of different Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performances.
- Observation of live performances at different places in Konkan region of Maharashtra.
- Collecting literature i.e. books, reference articles related to Daśāvatāra performances by different research scholars.
- A tape recorder was used to record information from the performing troupes.
- A period of 2 to 3 days was spent in each village to interact with different performing troupes.

### **1.8.4 Outlines of the Documentation**

- The present study is of a performance related subject. Therefore special attention has been given to photographic and video documentation for getting reliable and accurate visual information.
- Photographs were taken of all specified Daśāvatārī troupes.
- Only a few performances were documented due to financial constraints.
- Emphasis has been given on the changes that occurred in performance text through the ages.

## **1.9 Methodology**

After looking at the contemporary status of the Daśāvatāra dance- drama, it was felt necessary to carry out an in-depth study of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. In order to make the study systematic, certain sections were thought of, before embarking the research, and relevant material was classified according to the sections. The efforts have been taken to explore and study the representation of Daśāvatāra in the traditional Indian art forms of painting, sculpture, literature, epigraphy and numismatics; handicrafts such as puppets, printed fabrics, embroidery and also philately. These findings have helped strengthen

the study of the history of Daśāvatāra as a Performing Art and its extension in the modern Cinema.

The documentation of the live performances of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka troupes supports the present study which is performance oriented. In view of the above objectives set for the present study, the data has been collected through different sources. Since the study in performance is a new area, the preference has been given to the performance analysis method. The secondary sources are profusely used, if found authentic, to supplement primary data, therefore the arguments are enlarged on the basis of available data. During this exercise, maximum care has been taken to verify their authenticity. On the whole, the current data collected from different sources is used in this appraisal.

➤ **A deeper study of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka tradition.  
(Infrastructure)**

- 1) Process of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka Performance.
- 2) Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka presentation.
  - Pūrva-raṅga
  - Uṭṭara-raṅga
- 3) Āhārya
  - Costume and Ornaments
  - Make-up
- 4) The presentation structure-
  - traditional way
  - modern presentation
- 5) Textual sources for performance.

➤ **The description of different features and elements to improve the texture of the presentation of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka**

➤ **The process of data collection**

- The primary data for the present study was collected from February 2012 to November 2013. During this period, extensive travel was undertaken to different places in Maharashtra.
- The tour covered both collecting literature i.e. Press articles, documentation of different performances, and also personal observations of live performances at different places in western Maharashtra (Konkan).
- Field work was done on different levels at different intervals in the villages.
- Pilot investigation helped to standardize the mode of conducting interviews.
- A period of three to four days was spent in each village to interact with different members of the performing troupes. This helped to finalize and standardize the interviews.
- The final investigation has been developed according to the primary sources of the performances.

Though, Maharashtra has lost its original classical dance or drama tradition today, it certainly has the necessary cultural, musical and literary base for the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. This author as a classical dancer, taking inspiration from the culture of Maharashtra feels hopeful and has faith that Maharashtra can evolve a new ‘dance-drama’ mode of traditional Nāṭya. As we have seen this happening in Bhāgavata Melā of Tamil Nadu and Yakṣagāna of Karnataka, the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka can be moulded for the future presentation to the status of receiving official recognition as a classical theatre form of Maharashtra and thus enrich the great art traditions of this land.

## CHAPTER- 2

### DAŚĀVATĀRA IN INDIAN CULTURE

#### 2.1 Daśāvatāra and Ancient Literature

Lord Viṣṇu manifested himself in various incarnations are called *avatāra*. Lord Viṣṇu assumed ten different forms for the destruction of evil or restoration of faith in the mortal world, are very popular and also important topics for the Purāṇas.

Vaiṣṇavism is one of the most important of the *brāhmaṇical* cults in India which is centred on Viṣṇu, but this Viṣṇu was not identical with the Vedic God Viṣṇu. In Ṛgveda<sup>1</sup> Viṣṇu is not mentioned as one of the major gods. He is mentioned in the ancient texts as Trivikrama, (he of the three strides) these three steps in course of time developed into the myth relating to the dwarf incarnation of the *purāṇic* Viṣṇu (the fifth one, Vāmanāvatāra, in the stereotyped order in the list of Daśāvatāra).

The special character of the *purāṇic* god as the preserver and benevolent deliverer is also outlined in the Vedic texts. In the epic and Purāṇic age Viṣṇu is regarded as the most influential member of the pantheon. The concept of Daśāvatāra got transformed from time to time in the process of systematisation of the beliefs. The term *avatāra* or *Vibhāvas* (i.e. incantatory forms) is applied to the act of the god coming down in the form of a man or an animal or as man-animal to the earth and living there in that form till the purpose for which He had descended to the earth was fulfilled. The Indian ideology about *avatāra* of the Divine Being is, however briefly but clearly expounded specially with reference to the god's human incarnations in two verses of the 4<sup>th</sup> canto of the Bhagvadgīta.

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<sup>1</sup> Macdonell A.A. : A vedic Reader for Students, (Ṛgveda PP.122; A.V.,7.26,4), Oxford, 1917.



“*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāyaca duṣkṛtām*  
*dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge* ||”<sup>2</sup>

“The Supreme God Lord Mahāviṣṇu Himself adored by the Vedas took innumerable incarnations to destroy the evil and protect the good”. (Bhāgavata Gītā 4.7–8)

The Bhagvadgītā passage explains the ideology underlying the Avatārvāda in Hindu thought. It does not specify the number of the Divine incarnations. Some later texts like the Pancarātra School, have tried to fix the number of the *avatāra*, which gradually came to be stereotyped.

Here, A brief reference to a few of the epic, *purāṇic* and Pancarātra passages enumerating the various incarnations will be useful for understanding of the Daśavatāra concept.

### 2.1.1 Purāṇas

Purāṇas mean ancient stories. All the major Purāṇas are in Sanskrit language and therefore it can be assumed that they must have been written after the second century C.E. Purāṇas are supplementary explanations of the Vedas. According to tradition or belief, the Purāṇas were composed by Vyāsa at the end of Dwāpara Yuga. Traditionally it is said that there are eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas and eighteen Upa-Purāṇas. Each Mahā-Purāṇa lists eighteen canonical Purāṇas. In their present form they are not very ancient, none going back earlier than the Gupta period and all containing interpolations, but most of their legendary material belongs to the Vedas. Here, we cannot catalogue the great mass of religious and philosophical literature of Vaiṣṇavism, some of which will be mentioned in the following chapters of the thesis.

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<sup>2</sup> Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, Marathi translation, Geeta press, Gorakhpur, 1989, sixth edition, PP.112-113.

- **Some of the listed Purāṇas and their possible dates are as follows:**

1. Viṣṇu Purāṇa (4<sup>th</sup> c.C.E.), 2. Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (4<sup>th</sup> c.C.E.), 3. Vāyu Purāṇa (5<sup>th</sup> C.C.E.), 4. Bhāgavata Purāṇa (6/7<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 5. Kūrma Purāṇa (7<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 6. Agni Purāṇa (8<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 7. Nārada Purāṇa (10<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 8. Brahma Purāṇa (10<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 9. Garūḍa Purāṇa (10<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 10. Skanda Purāṇa (11/12<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 11. Padma Purāṇa (12/15<sup>th</sup> C. C.E.), 12. Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa, 13. Narasimha Purāṇa, 14. Vahni Purāṇa, 15. Śiva Mahā Purāṇa, 16. Devi Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa, 17. Brihaddharma Purāṇa, 18. Nārayaṇa Purāṇa, 19. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, 20. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, 21. Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa, 22. Liṅga Purāṇa, 23. Varāha Purāṇa, 24. Vāmana Purāṇa, 25. Matsya Purāṇa and many more.

There are many other Purāṇas of recent origin. The oldest Purāṇa is believed to date back to 300 C.E., and the most recent ones to 1300-1600 C.E. All the Purāṇas seem to have been revised at a later date.<sup>3</sup> The Purāṇas have been composed at different times and many scholars opine that they are compiled by many hands between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E.

- **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa is one of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas. It is considered one of the most important Purāṇa and has been given the name *Purāṇa ratna* (gem of Purāṇas). It is presented as a dialogue between Paraśara and his disciple Maitreya. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa is divided into six different parts. It discusses the stories of battles fought between *asuras* (demons) and *devas* (gods), the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu and their genealogy and stories of legendary kings.

The text starts with detailed stories of creation and introduces the concept of four *yugas*, an elaborate story of the Samudra Mañthana, or

<sup>3</sup> Dixitar V.R.R. : Purāṇa –Index, R. Shrinivasan, Madras, 1951, first edition

the churning of the ocean. The famous story of Hiraṇyakaśyapu and Prahlāda is discussed in the next chapter. The sixth section discusses the Kali age, the concepts of universal destruction and the importance of the Purāṇas in general.<sup>4</sup>

- **Bhāgavata Purāṇa**

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BP) has been placed at different dates by scholars. Traditionally it is accepted from 3000B.C.E. to 400 B.C.E. and even as late as 1000c. C.E. It includes myths about all ten of Viṣṇu's *avatārs*.

As many as forty *avatārs* of Viṣṇu are mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Though the book adds that the *avatārs* are innumerable, twenty-two *avatārs* of Viṣṇu are listed numerically in the first book. Besides these, another four *avatārs* are described<sup>5</sup>. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has its focus on *bhakti* (devotion) aspect. The Bhāgavata includes different stories of Viṣṇu's *avatāra* and the life of Kṛṣṇa.

The tenth book of the Bhāgavata which is dedicated to Kṛṣṇa includes the collection of stories about the life of Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is made up of a number of isolated stories, incidents and innumerable episodes of Kṛṣṇa's life. In Harikathā performance the stories for narration were taken mainly from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. It also contains references to the South Indian Alvār saints and it makes post facts prophecy of the spread of Viṣṇu worship in Tamil region (BP XI.5.38–40).

The first book describes the ten *avatars* of Viṣṇu.

*“yathā jale sañjihate jalaukaso 'py udumbare vā maśakā mano-maye //  
yāni yānīha rūpāṇi krīḍanārthaṃ bibharṣi hi /  
tair āmrṣṭa-śuco lokā mudā gāyanti te yaśaḥ //  
namaḥ kāraṇa-matsyāya pralayābdhi-carāya ca /  
hayaśrṣṇe namas tubhyaṃ madhu-kaiṭabha-mṛtyave //*

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<sup>4</sup> Viṣṇu Purāṇa Editid by Gupta Munilal, Geeta press, Gorakhpur, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Punendunarayana Simha, 2<sup>nd</sup> reprint, Geeta press, Gorakhpur , 1950

*akūpārāya bṛhate namo mandara-dhāriṇe /  
kṣity-uddhāra-vihārāya namaḥ sūkara-mūrtaye //  
namas te 'dbhuta-siṃhāya sādhu-loka-bhayāpaha /  
vāmanāya namas tubhyaṃ krānta-tribhuvanāya ca //  
namo bhrguṇāṃ pataye drpta-kṣatra-vana-cchide /  
namas te raghu-varyāya rāvaṇānta-karāya ca //  
namas te vāsudevāya namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca /  
pradyumnāyaniruddhāya sātvatāṃ pataye namaḥ //  
namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine /  
mleccha-prāya-kṣatra-hantre namas te kalki-rūpiṇe // ....”*  
(Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, Skandhas 1 - 12)<sup>6</sup>

- **Vāyu Purāṇa**<sup>7</sup> (Chapter 98), mentions the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, of which the first three, Yajña, Narasiṃha and Vāmana are celestial, the rest being his human incarnations; they are Dattātreyā, Jāmadagnya Rāma, Dāśarathi Rāma, Vedavyāsa, Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and Kalki, the future incarnation. Here Buddha is not included in the list and a few other *avatāras* like Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha are replaced by Yajña, Dattātreyā and Vedavyāsa.
- **Garūḍa Purāṇa** deals with astronomy, medicine, grammar, and gemstone structure and qualities. Garūḍa Purāṇa contains the list of twenty-two *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. It is mentioned that there have been several other incarnations of Viṣṇu but those mentioned are the major ones.<sup>8</sup>
- **Kūrma Purāṇa** is one of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas. It is believed to have been directly narrated by the Lord Viṣṇu to the sage Nārada, and it contains the details about the Kūrma *avatāra*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Punendunarayana Simha, 2<sup>nd</sup> reprint, Geeta press, Gorakhpur, 1950

<sup>7</sup> Vāyu Purāṇa, translated by Ramapratap tripathi Shastri, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Garuda Purāṇa, Dutta M.N., Cosmo publications, New Delhi, 1908.

<sup>9</sup> Kurma Purāṇa, translated in to English by Nagar Shanti Lal, edited by Joshi K.L., Parimal Publications, New Delhi-7, 2011.

- **Narasimha Purāṇa** is one of the Upa Purāṇas. The chapters 36 to 54 of the Narasimha Purāṇa contain narratives of the ten *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. Chapter 21 and 22 contain the short genealogical lists of the kings of the Sūrya *vaṁśa* (Solar dynasty) and the Soma *vaṁśa* (Lunar dynasty), the former ending with Buddha *avatāra*.<sup>10</sup>
- **Vāmana Purāṇa** is one of the eighteen Mahā Purāṇas. It is devoted to the Vāmana *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are mentioned in this Purāṇa.<sup>11</sup>
- **Padma Purāṇa**<sup>12</sup> is divided into five parts. In the first part of the text, sage Paulatsya expounds to Bhīṣma the religion and the essence of religion. The second part describes in detail Pṛthvī (earth). The third part includes the description of the cosmos and creation also the description of Bhārata Varṣa. The fourth part that is *pātāla khaṇḍa* describes the life of Rāma *avatāra*. Some sections are also devoted to the life and deeds of Kṛṣṇa *avatāra*.
- The **Varāha Purāṇa** is one of the major eighteen Mahā Purāṇas, It describes in detail the Varāha incarnation (*avatāra*) of Viṣṇu, and narrates the rescue of Pṛthvī.<sup>13</sup> In the list of the ten *avatāras* Buddha is implicitly excluded<sup>14</sup>
- **Matsya Purāṇa** mentions that during the period of *mahāpralaya*, Lord Viṣṇu had taken Matsya *avatāra* to save the seeds of all lives and Manu. This Purāṇa is the story of the Matsya *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu, A number of Hindu scholars have taken the

<sup>10</sup>NarasimhaPurāṇa Sanskrit text with English translation by Joshi K.L. and Trivedi Bindiya, Parimal Publications, Delhi-7, 2003, first edition.

<sup>11</sup>Sharma B.N. : Vāmana in literature and Art, Purāṇa, Varanasi, Vol. 12, No.1, Feb. 1970, PP.54-64,

<sup>12</sup>Padma Purāṇa translated by Deshpande N.A., Part I toVII, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 2009.

<sup>13</sup>Oza Rameshwar G. S. : Varāha avatāra, Hindi Bharatiya Anushilan, Volume presented pandit Gaurishankar Hirachand Oza, Alahabad, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1990 Vikarmi, PP. 32-58.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. 32-58.

progression of forms assumed by Viṣṇu in the narrative, from fish to dwarf human and to human with an axe, to Kalki (the future human yet to come) as an analogy for evolution.<sup>15</sup>

- **Kalki Purāṇa**<sup>16</sup> is a prophetic work in Sanskrit and is considered Upa-Purāṇa that details the life and times of Kalki, the tenth and final *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu.
- **Agni Purāṇa** also contains the list of ten incarnations but this list of ‘Daśāvatāra’ widely differs from the usually accepted one. **Śani Purāṇa** (49, 1-9) also gives iconographic description of the Daśāvatāra images. The list includes the name of Buddha with all the other *avatāra*.

### 2.1.2 Pañcarātra Saṁhitās<sup>17</sup>

The evidence of the early and late Pañcarātra Saṁhitās requires to be separately considered. The Sātvata Saṁhitā (the earliest in the series), enumerates almost thirty-nine incarnations of the God Viṣṇu, which list is copied by the Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā (later than the Sātvata). In this list of the accepted ten names of the *avatāras*, a few of the sub-Vyūhas are added and the deities belonging to the Mahāyana Buddhist cult are also mentioned.

### 2.1.3 Mahābhārata

The Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata refers in one list (XII, 349, 37) to the different *avatāras* Varāha, Vāmana, Narasimha and ‘Man’ incarnations. The human incarnations refer to Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Bhārgava Rāma and Dāśarathi Rāma in chapter 389 (Verses 77-90) of

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<sup>15</sup> Karmarkar A.P.: The Matsya avatāra of Viṣṇu: Its proto-Indian Origin and development, Ken Volume, 1941, PP.253-257.

<sup>16</sup> Kalki Purāṇa by Chaturvedi B. K., Diamond Pocket Books (P) Lit. New Delhi-20, 2006

<sup>17</sup> Schrader F. Otto: Introduction to the Pancaratra and the Ahirbudhnya Samhita, Adyar Library, Madras, 1916.

the same section; but a fuller list of the incarnations is given in verse 104 of the same chapter, which contains the names of Haṁsa, Kūrma, Matsya, Varāha, Narsimha, Vāmana, Rāma (Bhārgava), Rāma (Dāśarathi), Sātvata (Vāsudeva or Baladeva) and Kalki. The number ten is to be noted here, and the absence of Buddha in this list may show that Buddha had not as yet been regarded as an *avatāra*.<sup>18</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Daśāvatāra and Saṅgama Literature

It is very much interesting and thought provoking to find out the connections of Daśāvatāra in the ancient Tamil literature popularly known as “Saṅgama Literature<sup>19</sup>”

The dating of Saṅgama literature has been 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E. or 300 B.C.E. to 300 C.E. (The authorities differ in dating the Saṅgama literature, as they differ about the existence of Saṅgama, correlation of megalithic culture with Saṅgama period. The scholars tried to place it up to the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. in different ways under the guise of archaeological and linguistic evidence.)

Paripādal gives many details of Mahābhārata directly with specific terminology<sup>20</sup>. The references of some *avatāra* of Viṣṇu are found in the Saṅgama literature. The representation might have been converted to “Daśāvatāra concept” for easy remembrance and broad classification. According to the research observations by K. V. Ramakrishna Rao, only Narasimha and Varāha *avatāras* are mentioned in Paripādal.

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<sup>18</sup>Pusalkar A.D. : Studies in Epics and Purāṇas of India, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, -7, 1955, first edition ; The Mahābhārata, Amarachitra Katha, Mumbai, Special Issue, August 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Sen Shailendra Nath : Ancient Indian History and Civilization, New Age International (P) Ltd., New Delhi-2, 1999, second edition, PP.204-207.

<sup>20</sup> Rao Ramakrishna K.V.: “Traces of Mahābhārata in Saṅgam Literature” as reported in Hinduwebsite.com <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/>

## 2.1.5 Observations

Purāṇas have preserved a wonderful record of spreading religious movements. The Daśāvatāra concept shows the remarkable appearance of Lord Viṣṇu in Purāṇas, who is considered as a preserver of the Universe.

Purāṇic literature has its own importance in preserving a data which is related to Hindu religious concepts. These theories taught the theories of biological evolution, codes of moral conduct, greatness of righteousness and materialism through the stories of the ten incarnations. The concept of Daśāvatāra evolved in the course of time and was also used in the field of Indian Arts.

Each myth related to Daśāvatāra is connected with some older historical fact. The stories of Daśāvatāra were also used to preach important teachings like greatness of righteousness and to spread devotionalism (*bhakti-bhāva*) in the society of the time.

Different lists of Viṣṇu's *avatāras* appear in different Purāṇic texts. *Avatāra* stories are developed over a long period of time. The commonly accepted number of ten was fixed well before the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. In the Purāṇa stories one can observe many variations and exaggerations. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as innumerable. Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are the two most widely known and worshiped *avatāra*.

The fish legend first appears in the Brāhmaṇas, and the Noah's Ark theme suggests Semitic influence. The story of the second incarnation seems to be a piece of early folklore, but the identification of the Kūrma *avatāra* is comparatively late, though frequently mentioned in literature, it had little importance in dance-drama culture. The story of Varāha *avatāra* also appears in the Brāhmaṇas, but according to some scholars, it probably developed through some primitive cultural



beliefs. The Boar incarnation was important in some parts of India, especially in parts of Mālwā, in Gupta period, where a divinity in the form of a Boar was worshipped. Narasimha was worshipped by different sects as their special deity, and was often depicted in sculpture. Narasimha *avatāra* story has a great importance in Indian traditional dance-dramas. The story of the three steps of Viṣṇu is as old as the Ṛgveda, but other popular elements were incorporated into the story. Though Paraśurāma is frequently referred to in literature, he seems to have been specially worshipped in Maharashtra and Kerala. The story of Rāma is rather a matter of literature than of religion. It is perhaps significant that Rāma *avatāra* became more popular after the Muslim invasion. The Divine Cowherd has produced great religious poetry and inspired many saints of India. In Jayadeva's Gīta Govinda, which contains one of the earliest lists of incarnations, Keśava, becomes Buddha out of compassion for animals, in order to put an end to Vedic sacrifices. This probably gives a clue to the true background of the Buddha *avatāra*. He was included in the list, as other deities were included, in order to assimilate heterodox elements into the Vaiṣṇavite fold. Kalki *avatāra* is must have been a late addition to Vaiṣṇavite mythology, and does not play a very important part in literature.

There seems no harm in assuming that this order of all the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu came to be recognised throughout India during 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century C.E. During this period, perhaps, a new school of thought emerged that in a way, compiled the ten incarnations into a list of Daśāvatāra. We can also assume that there might have been some special reasons and circumstances for accepting the specific thoughts and theories by the then existing schools of thought.

The Purāṇas, which are the storehouse of stories, were recited and expounded for a long time in various ways like Purāṇa Paṭhaṇa is the

reading and expounding of the spiritual texts. Pravaçana is the way of storytelling in which the text will be sung to a minimum of musical notes. Upanyāsa is another type of Pravaçana, which includes *upakathās* and philosophical explanations. Saṅgīta Upanyāsa is a musical discourse. All these different ways of spiritual story telling were performed sitting on a dais. A person sees the act being carried out in some distant place at a distant time when a Purāṇa is presented. This style of storytelling is still followed in Kathā Kālakṣepa and Kīrtana. Thus we can see that the art of storytelling with music is a time-old activity. Which slowly underwent different changes and eventually in the seventeenth century, in the State of Maharashtra, it developed in to what is known today as Harikathā. But it itself is the development of Kīrtana which has its influence on Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka.

## **2.2 Avatāras other than the accepted and popular List of Daśāvatāra**

The mythology associated with the Bhārgava Rāma clearly points out that he was the symbol of the militancy of the *brāhmaṇas* against the *kṣatriyas*. Paraśurāma, as this form of his name indicates, should hold a battle-axe (*paraśu*) in his right hand, and in the Daśāvatāra slabs he is invariably shown as two-armed. Some texts, however, describe a four-armed variety of his image; such images are separate representations, and are extremely rare. Thus, the four-armed image of this Avatāra from Ranihati (Dacca) is of unique interest and importance; its front right hand holds a battle-axe, the remaining hands holding a *śankha*, a *cakra* and a *gadā*.

Dāśarathi Rāma's story is well known; it appealed to the imagination of the people of India ideal of manhood. In the Daśāvatāra reliefs of the early and late mediaeval periods, Rāma is almost invariably depicted as two-armed, his hands holding a bow and an arrow. Separate cult images of him in stone and bronze of a comparatively late period are known; in these he

is usually shown accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān. Scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa are very frequently found illustrated in the early and late mediaeval temple walls not only in India, but also in Indonesia.

A confusion of ideas about Balarāma's exact identity, however, remained in the minds of the scholars, for different texts present him in different forms. In one form Balarāma is a sort of a bucolic deity connected with agriculture and harvests, in another he is the incarnation of Ananta Nāga, a companion of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, and last, though not the least, he was the elder brother of Vāsudeva himself in which character he was first a Vīra and then a Vyūha. Again, in the list of the ten incarnations his place is sometimes, though rarely, occupied by Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa himself. Balarāma's importance as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu has been proved by literary data.

Balarāma is considered as one of the Daśāvatāra in South Indian traditions, and Buddha is not considered as part of the list. According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Balarāma is said to have appeared in the Dwāpara Yuga (along with Kṛṣṇa) as an incarnation of Śeṣa. He is also counted as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu by the majority of Vaiṣṇava movements. Such lists contain no mention of Buddha.

In Maharashtra and Goa, Viṭhobā's image replaces the traditional representation of Kṛṣṇa<sup>21</sup>, when depicted as the ninth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, in some temple sculptures and Hindu astrological almanacs. The saint-poets of Maharashtra also praised Viṭhobā as a form of Buddha.

According to a recent study it has been proved that even Matsyendranātha, the first profounder of Nātha *sāmpradāya* was also considered an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. During 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> c. C.E. Maharashtra witnessed the development of three religious streams i.e. Mahānubhāva, Vārakari and Nātha *sāmpradāya*. The iconographic and

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<sup>21</sup> Dhare R.C.: *Shri Viṭṭhala Eka Mahāsamanvaya*, First published by Shri Vidya Publication, Pune in 1984, Reprinted by Padmagandha Publications, Pune, 2005.

literary evidence show the impact of Vārakari or Vaiṣṇava *sāmpradaya* on the Nātha *sāmpradaya*<sup>22</sup>. Even though the impact of Vaiṣṇava *sāmpradaya* on the Nātha *sāmpradaya* was short lived the evidence show the representation of Matsyendranātha's image, as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.

## **2.3 Motifs related to Daśāvatāra on Indian coins**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

In the evolution of living species, it has been universally acknowledged that man represents the final stage, as the most evolved and sentient living creature. His first effort had been to adjust himself with nature and other species. This close relation between man and nature was eventually reflected in art, sculpture and later in coins.

Art was man's prime medium of expression in the early days of civilization. It has served the purpose of expressing the thoughts, beliefs and actions of man very effectively. The primary concern of man in the very early days of civilisation was survival. Identifying all natural elements as deities endowed with supreme power, he started worshipping them, to protect him from natural calamities. This became his religion and the various aspects of this religious life found expression in the fine arts.

Numismatic evidence helps us in reconstructing the religious values cherished in the olden days. Representation of various deities on coins, give us an excellent idea of the dominant religious leanings at a given time and place.

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<sup>22</sup>Velankar Vaishali, Matsyendranātha: an Avatāra of Viṣṇu, Journal of the Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Vol. VII, (2004-5), Mumbai-400005. PP. 35

Artistic and imaginative depiction of the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu and representation of the different motifs belonging to the *avatāra* concept is a fascinating study.

#### **A ] Matsya and Kūrma**

Matsya and Kūrma motifs on Indian coins – The first documented coinage which was issued between the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. is believed to start with Punch-Marked coins.<sup>23</sup>

These coins are called punch-marked coins because of their manufacturing technique. These coins bear different types of symbols and are made of silver. The fascination of Indian creative mind for different varieties of animals makes the coins of India highly kaleidoscopic.

The first coins in India were minted much before the invasion of Alexander the Great in 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. It was around 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. by the Mahājanapadas of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. The coins of this period were called Puraṇas, Karṣāpaṇas or *paṇa*. These punch marked coins are mentioned in the Manu, Paṇini, and Jātaka stories. They lasted three centuries longer in the south than the north almost from 600c.B.C.E. to 300C.E.<sup>24</sup>.

These punch marked coins continued to be issued in large quantities during the Mauryan period (322-185 c.B.C.E.). They were not artistic, but they do show some designs such as Buddhist *caityas* and animals such as the horse and lion, etc.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar, *Bharatiya Sikke Eka Eitihasic Paricaya*, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007. PP.6

<sup>24</sup> As reported in "Puranas or Punch-Marked Coins (circa 600 BC - circa 300 AD)", Government Museum Chennai Retrieved 2007-09-06, [www.chennaiuseum.org/](http://www.chennaiuseum.org/)

<sup>25</sup> As reported in "Coins of Satavahanas (232 BC - 227 AD)". Government Museum Chennai Retrieved 2007-09-06 , [www.chennaiuseum.org/](http://www.chennaiuseum.org/)

The fish symbol is generally depicted in pairs and also in a tank (Uddehikas, early 2nd c. B.C.). Sometimes a group of boars is also found on some punch-marked coins.

**Animal symbols on the punch marked coins of the Mahājanapadas.<sup>26</sup>**

Janapada-Symbols on coins has been identified as under

**North Pāncāl-** Fish motif

**Vanga deśa-** Ship, Chakra and six arrows

**Magadha-** Five symbols (sun, chakra, Fish, Turtle, bow-arrow)

**Cedi-** Lotus and fish

**Andhra-** Cakra with three fish motifs

**Ujjain, Eran, Mathura-** Fish motif

**Ayodhyā-** Fish symbol with swastika

**Takṣaśīlā-** Fish motif on a pole

Rajendra Kulottanga-I (1070-1118 c. C.E.), who was a prince of Eastern Cālukya dynasty and a king of the Colās, had issued coins with the central punch bearing fish motif and two tigers seated on either side by a bow.

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<sup>26</sup> Dhavalikar M.K. : Pracin Bharatiya Naṅakaśāstra, Continental Publication, Pune- 30, 2006, Second edition pp. 33, 34

**The emblem/s of some of the principal dynasties of Deccan and South India:**<sup>27</sup>

Sl. No.	Name of the Dynasty	Emblem
1.	Calukya	Boar
2.	Rāṣtrakūṭas	Bull
3.	Kalacuri	Bull and Garuḍa
4.	Kadamba (Mysore and the Kanara region)	Hanumāna
5.	Yādava (Devagiri)	Lion, Garuḍa and Hanumān
6.	Hoyasala (Jaipur, Belgaun, Dharwer region)	Tiger
7.	Gaṅgā	Bull
8.	Mysore, (Hindu rulers)	Elephant, Śiva and Pārvati
9.	Pallava (South Deccan)	Bull, Lion, Ship, Fish, Turtle.
10.	Cera (present day Kerala)	Fish.
11.	Pāṅḍya (South and South-East Tamilnadu)	Fish (PL. 24, Fig. 1)
12.	Cola (Eastern Tamilnadu)	Tiger.

The Pāṅḍyas coins have been discovered in the Pāṅḍyan region near Madurai and other places. The coins of this dynasty are mostly in copper and sometimes in silver. They are usually die-struck but some are punch-marked. The different motifs appearing on the obverse of the Pāṅḍyan coins have the motifs of the tortoise, fish, *Svastika*,

<sup>27</sup> Zaa Amiteshwar, *Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya*, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007.PP.83-87.

domed temple, etc. Some coins also bear legends on the reverse. These are written in the Tamil language and the Tamil Brāhmi script is used. These convey the name or the title of the ruler of that dynasty. The reverse of most of their coins shows the fish motif which was their dynastic emblem. The copper coins of the Pāṇḍyas, besides the fish emblem also included the Cola standing figure or the Cālukyan devices associated with a fish.

Among the ancient coin motifs the depiction of a Fish motif was very popular in north and south India. But the relationship of these motifs with Viṣṇu's Daśāvatāra is not clear.

The importance given to these motifs indicates that these symbols had religious importance in some ancient cults.

## **B ] Varāha**

The evidence relating to the presence of wild boar is available from the prehistoric rock paintings in India. A number of seals from Mohenjo Daro depict the wild boar in different forms.

The words 'Śrī-Varāharāja' and Śrī Varāha are found on the obverse of the gold coins of the kings of Nala dynasty of Central India.<sup>28</sup> These legends refer to the ruler of the dynasty in the 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E. but it is possible that "Śrī Varāha" also could interpret to mean Varāha form of Viṣṇu as well<sup>29</sup>.

Viṣṇu on the coins of north India is not evident. However, Varāha is evident in the region of the Gangetic valley, in mid 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. We come across the Varāha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu on a coin of Mihira Bhoja. Mihira Bhoja I (836–885 c.C.E.) was a ruler of the Gurjara Pratihāra dynasty and was a devotee of Viṣṇu. He adopted the title of

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<sup>28</sup> Mirashi V.V., Studies in Indology, vol.3, Vidarbha Samshodhana Mandal, Nagpur, 1962, pp.98-99.

<sup>29</sup> Shanti Lal Nagar, Varaha in Indian Art, Culture and Literature, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 1992, pp.100



Ādivarāha which is inscribed on some of his coins. On a beautiful gold coin, the Varāha is shown holding Mother Earth by the tusk, with one hand on hip and the other on the knee of a raised leg. Ādivarāha, (PL.24, Fig.2a) the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu, wears a long "vanamāla" to right with his left leg raised. Below is a small lion, to the right a sun-wheel (*cakra*) symbol, a moon symbol and another dumb-bell-like symbol is above and a trident and conch shell on the left and a two-lined inscription 'Śrīmad Ādi Varāha'.<sup>30</sup> This depiction matches very well with the Ādivarāha representation in cave no.5 of Udayagiri (M.P.). A similar motif is also found on a coin of Śrīmadādivarāha, identified with Mihira Bhoja. Vināyakapāla, a successor of Mihira Bhoja, also shows the Varāha (PL.24, Fig.2b) on his copper issues.<sup>31</sup>

The coin of Śaktivarman (1000-1020c.C.E.), the eastern Calukya prince and also the coin of Rājarāja Cola-I (1019-1059c. C.E.) shows the symbol of boar facing left and a big lamp on either side with the *aṅkuśa* (elephant goad), a *chhatra* (parasol) and two *cauries* (fly-whisks) punched in the centre.<sup>32</sup>(PL.24, Fig.3)

The coin of Bharavarman Sundar Pāṇḍya I bear the symbol of Varāha with the sun and moon on Obverse .It also has an inscription "Sundar Pāṇḍya".<sup>33</sup>

The Vijayanagara Empire from 1336–1646 C.E., was situated in southern India. It can be clearly observed that the pattern of

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<sup>30</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar, Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007.PP.76

<sup>31</sup> Rath Bishwajeet, Deities on Indian Coins, 1999, IIRNS Publications, Nasik, PP.22

<sup>32</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar, Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007, PP.83

<sup>33</sup> Dhavalikar M.K. : Pracin Bharatiya Naṅakaśāstra, Continental Publication, Pune- 30, 2006,Second edition, PP.258

Vijayanagara currency was carefully standardized. The standard unit of coin issued by the Vijayanagara Empire was Varāha and came in the Ghattivarāha, Doddavarāha and Śuddhavarāha coin type. These coins, give information pertaining to contemporary political, economic and cultural history.

### **C ] Narasimha**

The lion symbol gained more popularity than the horse symbol in India. The symbol represented power and might. The earliest coins to bear lion motifs were issued by the foreign rulers, i.e. the Indo-Greek kings called Pantaleon 185-175 c. B.C.E. and Agathocles (180-165 c. B.C.E.). However, the lion device also appeared on the Indian silver punch-marked coins. The lion symbol appears on the coin of Taxila, Agaras (Punjab) (late 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.E.), Rajanyas (Punjab), Rajasthan (1st B.C.E) and Mālva.

The Buddhist contact with lion further transformed as the power of the liberation; The Buddha has been described as “Śākyasimha” i.e. the lion of Śākyas.

From the coinage point of view, the reign of Kumara Gupta (415-455 c. C. E.) is very significant. The coins of Simha-mahendra type have a Sanskrit legend, “*sākṣādiva narasimho simhamahendro jayatyaniśam*”. This is in Upagīti vṛtta. It suggests that the king himself is a Narasimha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.<sup>34</sup>

The Sātavāhana coins (PL.24, Fig.4) clearly show the lion motif and also on the coins of The Kadambas of Goa (11<sup>th</sup> c.C.E.) depiction of the lion motif can be found. Some special coins issued by Viṣṇukunḍin

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<sup>34</sup> Dhavalikar M.K. : Pracin Bharatiya Naṅakaśāstra, Continental Publication, Pune- 30, 2006, Second edition, PP.204

(5<sup>th</sup> c.C.E.) (PL.24, Fig.5) show the depiction of the lion on one side and the conch shell on other side.<sup>35</sup>

King Bhillama of Yādava dynasty established his capital at Devagirī near present day Aurangabad (Maharashtra) by the year 1185 C.E. He established his rule throughout the Maratha country. The Yādava dynasty was a powerful presence in the thirteenth century but was constantly involved in warfare with the south and north Indian regions.

The cup shaped gold coins of Yādavas of Devagirī called ‘*padma tankas*’ in the literature from their central motif of a *padma* or lotus. It is interesting to note that it also bears the lion symbol.<sup>36</sup>

The Vijayanagara Empire patronised the ancient Hindu culture of the country. The Coins issued by Harihararāya (1376-1404 C.E.) represent Lakṣmi Narasiṃha sitting on obverse (PL.24, Fig.6).<sup>37</sup>

## **D ] Vāmana**

Some of the special coins that are issued by Kumāra Gupta and Samudra Gupta can be mentioned below.

### **Chhatra type:**

We find a figure of a king with a dwarf holding a *chhatra* or an umbrella in his hand. The left hand of king is on his sword and he is making offerings by his right hand. There is a figure of a goddess on

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<sup>35</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar, Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007, PP.83

<sup>36</sup>Dhavalikar M.K. : Pracin Bharatiya Nanakaśāstra, Continental Publication, Pune- 30, 2006, Second edition, PP.243

<sup>37</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar, Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, Nasik 422007, 2003, PP.86.

the reverse side of this coin.<sup>38</sup> But precise significance of the dwarf figure is yet not known.

### **E ] Paraśurāma**

Samudragupta (335-375 c. C.E.) issued different types of gold coins. His Battle-axe type is important as it shows the 'Battle-axe' motif on the obverse, the King standing and holding a battle-axe in the left hand and his right hand is resting on the waist; sometimes a sword is also seen hanging from his belt.

This variety has the letter *Kṛ* (presumably for *Kṛtānta*) under the king's arm.

Circular Brāhmi legend “*Kṛtāntaparaśurjayatyajitarājayetajitah*”, describes the irresistible prowess of the emperor and states that “Victorious is the conqueror of unconquered kings, himself invincible and a veritable battle-axe of the God of Death”. The line is in Pṛthvi metre.<sup>39</sup> We do not find any name of a particular deity written on the coins.

### **F ] Rāma**

Among the later and post-Vijayanagar issues, we find Rama and Lakṣmaṇa (PL.24, Fig.7) (with or without Sītā). These coins are in gold.<sup>40</sup> The three centuries between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. was a period in Indian history when several Rajput families emerged to take control of specific territories in north and central India. One of these powers, The Kalacuris of Tripuri (Madhya Pradesh), introduced

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<sup>38</sup> Altekar Anant Sadashiv, Catalogue of The Gupta Gold coins in the Bayana HARD., Pub. The Numismatic Society of India, Prince of Wales Museum ,Bombay, 1954

<sup>39</sup> Early Indian coins Numismatic Evidence Dr. Savita Sharma Agam Kala Prakashan Delhi, 1990.PP.118.

<sup>40</sup> Rath Bishwajeet, Deities on Indian Coins,1999,IIRNS Publications,Nasik,PP.24.

the gold coins depicting Rāma with a bow, inscribed with 'Śrī' and 'Ra' on the left side and 'Ma' on the right side.<sup>41</sup>

The Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 c. C.E.) (PL.24, Fig.8) brought some new introduction on the pattern of coins. He introduced the effigy of Rāma and Sītā. This coin, popularly called the 'Rām-Sīyā' type was issued in both gold and silver and bears the embossing of the figure of Rāma and his wife Sītā on obverse whereas a word 'Rāmarāj' in Devanāgarī script on reverse<sup>42</sup>.

A rare 1818 c. C.E. coin minted by the East India Company, now in possession of Mr. Ashok Kamboj, Dehra Dun, a collector of rare manuscripts and coins (PL.24, Fig.9) shows Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā and Hanumāna. According to Dr. Amiteshwar Zaa the figure is of the temple token which was used in the temples.

#### **G ] Kṛṣṇa- Balarām**

Agathocles Dikaios was a Buddhist Indo-Greek king. He reigned between around 190 and 180 century B.C.E. The Coins of Agathocles with Hindu deities are the first known representations of Vedic deities on coins, (PL.25, Fig.10) and they display Avatāra of Viṣṇu: Balarāma-Sankarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma coins of Agathocles were found in Afghanistan belonged to 2nd century B.C.E. The coins had script in both Greek and Brāhmi and, it also shows an image of Viṣṇu, or may be Vāsudeva, carrying a Cakra and a conch shell, which are two of the four main sacred symbols of God in Vaiṣṇavism. Many other finds of ancient

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<sup>41</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar : Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007, PP.80-81.

<sup>42</sup>Rath Bishwajeet, Deities on Indian Coins, IIRNS Publications, Nasik, 1999, PP.26.

coins also prove the antiquity of Kṛṣṇa worship in India.<sup>43</sup> Vaiṣṇavism was entrenched in the entire Indian society.

Interestingly in Naṅghāt cave inscription in Maharashtra, Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa are also included in an invocation of a *brahmiṇa*. As epigraphically, this inscription is dated as the later-half of the first century B.C.E.

We can say that the blending of the symbols of various dynasties on the Pāṇḍyan coins must be an indication of their victory and power. A few of these coins bore the words like Sundara Pāṇḍya or the letter 'su' which is interesting. But some of the coins have a boar motif with the doubtful legend 'Vīra-Pāṇḍya' on one side and the figure of Veṅu Gopāla or *murlidhara* Kṛṣṇa on the other side of the coin. Many scholars opine that these coins were issued by the Pāṇḍyas and the feudatories of the Colas but could not be attributed to any particular king.

The figure of Dancing Kṛṣṇa is depicted on the King Singhaṇa's (1200-1247 c. C.E.) coin<sup>44</sup>.

According to the recent updates by Shri. Shailendra Bhandare, University of Oxford, on the internet group, Ancient Monuments, we get this interesting information. 'The Silver rupee of Tripura struck during the second reign of Yaśomanikya Deva (1600-1618 C.E.), with representation of Muralidhara Kṛṣṇa with two attendant Gopis, (PL.25, Fig. 14) above a roaring lion, the royal emblem and the inscription on the reverse also mentions the names of three queens - Lakṣmi, Gauri and Jaya Mahādevi'. He has also mentioned about the

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<sup>43</sup>Zaa Amiteshwar : Bharatiya Sikke Ek Eitihasic Paricaya, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatics Studies, 2003, Wikas Printers of Sakal, Nasik 422007, PP.16

<sup>44</sup>Dhavalikar M.K. : Pracin Bharatiya Naṅakaśāstra, Continental Publication, Pune- 30, 2006, Second edition, PP.243

motifs of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā on 18th-19th century jewelry imitations of Venetian gold Ducats from India (PL.25, Fig. 15).

### **H ] Veṅkaṭeśa and Bālakṛṣṇa**

On Vijayanagar coins; particularly on the gold coins of Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1500-1529 c. C.E.) (PL.25, Fig.11) Kṛṣṇa can be seen, (Depicted as Bāla Kṛṣṇa), with conch and *cakra* on either side of the deity.<sup>45</sup>

The rulers of Karṇāṭa dynasty (1570-1646 c. C.E.) seem to have been much influenced by Vaiṣṇavism. Veṅkaṭeśa is prominently seen on their coins with *śaṅkha* and *cakra*, the two main attributes of Viṣṇu. His vehicle Garuda and his incarnations as Rāma and Varāha are found on the coin of Tirumalaraya (1570-1573 c. C.E.) During the last thirty years of the declining days of the kingdom, Vaiṣṇavism dominated not only the capital but also at the local centres. During this period Viṣṇu in almost all the forms of his incarnation, appeared on the local coin.<sup>46</sup>

### **I ] Buddha**

The Kuśāṇa period witnessed a rapid growth in trade networks between the West and the East. The trade was also largely responsible for the patronage of Buddhism and eventually flourishing of the Gāndhāra and Mathurā schools of art. Kaniṣka (128-154 c. C.E) was the first ruler and perhaps only one in ancient world who minted coins with image of Buddha. The most significant deity to appear on any Kuśāṇa coin is the Buddha, identified on Kaniṣka's coins as Boddo. The first such coin was discovered by Maj. Gen. Alexander Cunningham in a deposit when he excavated the *stupa* at Ahinposh in Afghanistan and it now lies in the British Museum<sup>47</sup>. The placement accorded to Buddha in a pantheonic context when it comes to

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<sup>45</sup> Rath Bishwajeet: Deities on Indian Coins, IIRNS Publications, Nasik, 1999, PP.24.

<sup>46</sup> As reported in <http://orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/Journal/>

<sup>47</sup> Bhandare Shailendra : Gods on Gold Divine Representation and Kushan Coinage, *Heritage India*, Volume 5, Issue 3, Aug 2012- Oct. 2012, PP. 92

numismatic representation proves beyond doubt that Kaniṣka regarded the Buddha as a god and not just a historic personality. There are two types of Buddha coins, Standing Buddha, (PL.25, Fig. 12b and 13a) and sitting Buddha, (PL.25, Fig. 12a and 13b). Shown above is a very good example of Kaniṣka's coin portraying him sacrificing and Buddha sitting in *abhaya-dān* gesture.<sup>48</sup>

## Observations

The different Avatāra motif on coins, their artistic and imaginative depiction is in itself a fascinating study. Present work is not aimed at the detailed research. But this effort will be able to communicate, the importance and the range of different coins in a concise manner. It is possible that some motifs on coins have escaped notice.

Almost all the Indian dynasties have taken some animal motifs for their coins. These symbols signify their religious inclination. Their presence is still very much available in the modern coinage of India. The advance of science and technology will in no way be a hindrance to love and sympathy for animals. However, considerably more research work will be needed for a proper understanding of the religious symbols and motifs on the coins of different regions.

The worship of Viṣṇu began to spread under the Gupta rule (4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.). Śiva and Viṣṇu, representing Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava thought respectively, are much in evidence on coins of both north and south India. The representation of the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu, though evolved during the Śuṅga- Kuṣāṇa period, became popular in the sculptural art of Gupta period. It appears frequently in both theriomorphic and the therioanthropic type. The place given to Hindu deities by some medieval Muslim coinages is another significant factor. The depiction of Rāma and Sīta on coin appeared during the

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<sup>48</sup> Savita Sharma : Early Indian Symbols, Numismatic Evidence, Pub. Dr. Aqam Prasad, , Community Centre, Ashok Vihar, Printed by Arun Typographer at Mohan printing corp. Delhi – 110007



time of the Mughal Emperor Akbar which was the unique phenomenon in the numismatic history. The reason behind this was certainly to go with what was popular and well-accepted.

From the overall observation, one can remark that the representation of all the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, though evolved during the Gupta period, became popular in the sculptural art but never appeared on the coins. The depiction of a deity on one side and the king's bust on the other side on the coins can be a reflection of the importance of a divine inspiration, and a popular sanction of the religious beliefs of the time and place.

### Some seals of the great dynasties



Seal of the Eastern Calukya Grant of Ammarāja II. (Without Date.)



Seal of a copper-Plate Grant of Kulottuṅga-Coḍadeva II dated Śaka 1056 and Rājarāja dated Śaka 944.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Shanti Lal Nagar: Varaha in Indian Art, Culture and Literature, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 1992. PP.102, 78, 60 and 44.

## 2.4 Daśāvatāra- Indian Paintings and Epigraphic Evidence

Art and culture gives rise to all human interaction and creation. Culture thus is a very vast concept. Man, nature, human relations evoke responses in a special way. These may be intellectual, emotional or physical. They include moral, religious or aesthetic views. Indian paintings are a mode of expression to these responses.

People from every corner of the world have been migrating to India for thousands of years. The Indian culture thus has come under the influence of various cultures. This however did not completely destroy the original culture. In fact there was always the openness to accept new values and trends of different cultures. The Indian culture was influenced by the Moghul, the Persian and later on the British. Their aesthetic attitude influenced the Indian aesthetics and gave rise to new streams of art.

The tradition of painting in India is as old as Ṛgveda.<sup>50</sup> We have clear evidence of this tradition right from Ṛgveda to the works of Kālidāsa. We have Viṣṇudharmottarpurāṇa, generally dated between the fifth and the seventh centuries C.E. which is a pioneer ancient Indian text of this era. It discusses the types of appropriate paintings for various structures like temples and sculptures etc. It also distinguishes clearly between realistic, beautified and secular styles of painting.

The Indian visual art originated with the Indus vally civilization. It attained full flowering during the Mauryan period for the propagation of Buddhism. It manifested itself in different schools such as the Paal-Jain, Moghal, Rajput and miniature painting. The art that was initially employed for idol worship was based on Vedic philosophy. Indian music too has its roots in the Sāmaveda. There are different styles of paintings which have emerged in due course of time in different

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<sup>50</sup> Kulkarni Vinayak, (1996), Bhāratīya Kalā: Udgam āṇi vikāsa, Suyog Publications, Pune, PP.73

geographic locations as a result of religious and cultural impact. The transitions in Indian art were brought about due to various factors such as religion, royal patronage, philosophy and spirituality. Ashoka's desire to propagate Buddhism for example proved to be a major turning point for the Indian art.<sup>51</sup>

The highest achievements of this time are the caves of Ajanta and Kailasanātha temple in Ellora Caves in Maharashtra.

#### **2.4.1. a. Ancient Indian Cave Paintings**

A substantive part of the Ajanta paintings is from a later period, mainly from 460 C.E. to 480 C.E. The lines of the paintings at Ajanta are as if endowed with pace or *laya*. The composition of human figures and other form is such that these lines guide the viewer's eye smoothly over the entire composition. The paintings have not left much blank space in the group compositions. The Buddha figure is the embodiment of all the compassion, pathos and grace. Buddha paintings have a clustering of figures. Often, certain symbols surrounding the Buddha image such as the *bodhi* tree, seat, umbrella, sandals, footprints etc. are meant to amplify its message. The first time viewer might feel the crowding of the figures. But soon one can realise that they are not obstructive. The magnitude of the Buddha's figure as compared to the rest of the figures is perhaps not in proportion. But one can make out that it is a creative depiction of the principle of the priority and subsidiary in the composition. The detailed depiction of hair, ornaments, facial expressions, delicateness and beauty is exquisite in these paintings. This Ajanta style of painting was discovered in the year 1920<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Pp. 73

<sup>52</sup> Jayaprakash Jagtap, Indian Art History, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2010, Jagtap Publication House, Pune 411037, PP. 9

### 2.4.1. b. Medieval Indian Cave Paintings

The Olipathiviṣṇu Viṣṇugraham Cave complex was built in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. at Malaiyadippatti is an ancient rock-cut temple. It is located in the Manapparai Taluka of Tiruchirappalli district of Andhra Pradesh.

The walls of this temple are covered with paintings and stucco. Some scholars opine that the stucco and paintings belong to 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century C.E. There are sculptures of Lord Narasimha, Hayagrīva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Rāma in the temple *maṇḍapas*. The canopy of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* is covered with beautiful paintings of Daśavatāra.

All the streams of thought regarding various fields of Indian life attained maturity in the Gupta age (320-650 century C.E.). The process of the evolution of society, religion, literature, philosophy and arts that had been going on for centuries together attained fulfilment during this period. The majestic and divine expression of the art of painting during the Gupta period was not a sudden development<sup>53</sup>. It was the culmination of the various ancient traditions. All the fine arts like painting, music, theatre, sculpture and literature experienced a tremendous progress in this period. New religious trends gave rise to novel aesthetic concepts. The Ajanta caves and the frescos, architecture, the sculptures at Mathura and Sarnath, the Viṣṇu temple at Devgadh stand as testimony to this. Thus an all round development of each and every creative art is the most distinguishing feature of this period.

During the Gupta period however, sculptures especially of deities changed radically. There came about awareness that the outward human form alone could not project the innermost feelings of the heart. These had to be reflected on the face of the figures. The standing Buddha at Mathura, the seated Buddha at Sarnath, the Varāha at Udaygiri cave are well known examples. Some deities were also

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<sup>53</sup>Jayaprakash Jagtap, Indian Art History, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2010, Jagtap Publication House, Pune 411037, PP.,67.

have been crafted with *ugra* facial expressions like the figure of Narasimha engaged in killing Hiranyakaśyapu at Ellora. These figures are a part of some incident and the faces of the figures bear a cruel expression to suit the occasion.

#### **2.4.2. The ancient paintings on the wall of temples**

The Pallava king Mahendra Verma in one of his inscriptions states that he had prepared a catalogue about the technique of drawing based on the book 'Kimāna Daṇḍakalpa'a treatise on the southern style of painting. This only shows that the southern style was in existence during the Pallava period (600-900c.C.E.). Paintings in fact have been a part of the various cave temples of the South since ancient times. The Pallava paintings at Sittanvasal and the paintings at Bṛhadīśvara temple in Tanjavur do show the influence of the Ajanta painting style. But the depiction of the costumes and ornaments is typically South Indian. This style grew under two phases, firstly under the Vijayanagara rule and later during the reign of five Muslim emperors after the fall of the Bahamani kingdom. During the Vijayanagara era (1340-1565c.C.E.), the wall paintings' especially narrating the royal life made a comeback and it is popular until now. The best representation of these paintings can be seen in the Vīrabhadra temple at Lepakṣi. Vijayanagara paintings depict the scenes from Draupadi's wedding and Kirātārjunīya (Arjuna's penance). The paintings of the Nāyaka phase (the 16th century and the 17<sup>th</sup> century C.E) of Madurai and Tanjavur were as important as these of the Vijayanagara phase. Nāyaka paintings depict the 'samudra maṅthana' scene, showing the rising of the objects from the ocean as it was churned.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jayaprakash Jagtap, Indian Art History, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2010, Jagtap Publication House, Pune 411037, PP. 97.

It's important to note that even the Kāvī murals which decorated the walls of the temples included the theme of Daśāvatāra. The themes selected for the mural generally depended upon the main deity of the temples. The theme like Daśāvatāra could be seen on the walls of Vaiṣṇava temple. Different artists may select the same subject but their depictions would be quite different.

It is interesting to note that the state of Rajasthan holds the first place in having mural sites and the state of Kerala holds the second place. This state is famous for having the largest collection of mural sites in India. According to some scholars the Kerala paintings represent the final and fading phase of Indian traditional painting style which belongs to the period from the mid-sixteenth century C.E. onwards.

These wall paintings are characterized by elaborate ornamentation and sensitive portrayal of emotions. To represent *sātwika* feelings different shades of green colour were used. Characters of *rājasika* feelings were portrayed in red colour or golden colour and the *tāmasika* feelings were represented in white and the *rākṣas* were represented by black.

Viṣṇu and his *sātwika* incarnations (PL.1, Fig.1a-b-c) and other pious beings like Prahlāda were always painted in green. Bhūdevī, (goddess earth) and Brahmā were also painted in red.

Another name which must not go unmentioned is Rājā Ravi Varma (1848-1906 C.E.). When Rājā Ravi Varma appeared on the scene the Moghal and Rajput styles of art were already on the decline. In the early phase of his career Rājā Ravi Varma's paintings were in the Tanjavur style but they also had the lifelikeness of the Western art and the three dimensional effect of the background. The imagery in his paintings reflects his knowledge of the Sanskrit and Malyalam poetry. He paid special attention to the composition of the painting imparting adequate prominence to the main theme. His precision in the details of

the painting, the appropriate facial expressions of the characters, the graceful lines and the knowledge of the human anatomy are some of the distinguishing features of his art. Daśāvatāra of Viṣṇu (PL.2, Fig.2) are also included in his portrait style of painting.

### 2.4.3 Indian Miniature Paintings

The pre-medieval and earlier times had seen the glorious tradition of large size paintings. This tradition however disappeared during the post-medieval era. The miniature painting started as an embellishment for documents. Manuscripts came to be written for the propagation and spread of religion. Hand-written scriptures were embellished with small-sized pictures and designs. They were included in the scriptures primarily to beautify the text<sup>55</sup>. These pictures, though drawn to suit the content and occasion were bound by the limitations of space. Hence their pattern and style were quite limited. Though small in size they are regarded as an important milestone in the history of art. These themes are traditional and have come from the great compositions like **Rāmāyaṇa**, **Mahābhārata**, **Meghdūtam** and **Gīta Govinda**.<sup>56</sup> They were initially drawn on *tāḍapatra* (leaves of the fan-palm) and later on, a similar kind of paper. The Pal-Jain miniature paintings are an important link between the Ajanta art and the origin of the Moghal-Rajput art style.

Having originated in the Ajanta art the initial miniature paintings mostly dealt with Buddhist themes. Pictures were drawn on Buddha's birth, Buddha's salvation and Bodhisattva as well as some of Tantric deities. All human characteristics such as the *sātvika* feelings, the half open eyes, a sharp nose can be observed here. These pictures are two

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<sup>55</sup> Bapat Shreenand : Capturing The Written Word Manuscripts, Heritage India, Vol. 3, Issue 2, May 2010-Aug. 2010, Pune-411001. PP. 54

<sup>56</sup> Jayaprakash Jagtap : Indian Art History, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2010, Jagtap Publication House, Pune 411037, PP.99-100.

dimensional and ornamental. Bold lines and flat painting work are its distinguishing qualities.

#### **2.4.4 Manuscript illustrations of Daśāvatāra**

India possesses the richest collection of written manuscripts. The manuscripts found in India are of various types including Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Paper Manuscripts. They comprise various themes, textures and aesthetics, scripts, languages, calligraphies, and illustrations. The manuscripts are considered as a precious and authentic source of history in the recent times.

These handwritten manuscripts reflect the splendour of the Indian civilisation including languages, philosophy, art and architecture. Indian manuscripts were written in various languages and scripts.

Two illustrated manuscripts prepared under the title Daśāvatāra or Daśāvatāra-*kathā* belonging to Ranbir Singh's period (1857-85 C.E.) are preserved in Sri Pratap Museum, Srinagar.<sup>57</sup> One of them is in the Mughal style by a Muslim artist who adapted depiction of nature in all its minute details.

A manuscript of Bhāgavata *purāṇa*, dated 1648 C.E. at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, contains illustrations of Daśāvatāra. P.K. Gode who first reported the existence of the B.O.R.I. Bhāgavata *purāṇa* manuscript, states that the total number of folios of this manuscript is 334 and that of these 129 contain illustrations. This manuscript was copied in 1648 C.E. at Udayapura by Jasavanta and the illustrations were made by the painter Sahibadin. The illustrations of this manuscript are included in Rajasthan paintings and they are of Mewar style. The B.O.R.I. manuscript is a work that became a standard for manuscripts not only in Mewar but also throughout India.

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<sup>57</sup>Sukhadev Singh Charak: Jammu Rāgamāla Paintings, Pub. Abhinava Publications, New Delhi, (1998), PP.9



A copy of this manuscript is published by the Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO.

The manuscript contains only four *skandhas* of Bhāgavata *purāṇa* and illustrations related to Matsya (PL.4, Fig.8a,b,c), Kūrma (PL.5, Fig.9), Vāmana (PL.5, Fig.10a,b and PL.6, 10c), Paraśurāma (PL.6, Fig.11a and PL.7, 11b), Rāma (PL.7, Fig.12) and Kṛṣṇa (PL.7, Fig.13) *avatāra*. The illustrations in the twelfth *skandha* are related to *Kali yuga* (PL.8, Fig.14).

Another manuscript of Bhāgavata *purāṇa* in Persian script (PL.9, Fig. 15.a/b/c/d/e) and two illustrated manuscripts of the Pañcaratna Gīta at B.O.R.I. also contain illustrations of Daśāvatāra. Several manuscripts having such illustrations can be seen in various collections in Pune city; which may number in hundreds if a comprehensive survey is undertaken.

There are collections of manuscripts of devotional padas about the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, mainly by Jaggajyoti, Bhupatīndra, Jagadprakāśa, Candraprakāśa, and Ranajita<sup>58</sup>.

#### 2.4.5 Tanjavur paintings

Tanjavur painting dates back to the early 9th century C.E. a period of Cola rulers. This is a classical South Indian painting style belongs to the town of Tanjavur in Tamil Nadu state. These paintings are famous for their beauty and elegance. Usages of rich-bright colours with gold and detail workmanship are some of the prominent features of these paintings. The themes and scenes like Daśāvatāra (PL.8, Fig.16) are used for these paintings. Traditionally pearls, rubies, real diamonds and other precious stones as also gold were used to make Tanjavur paintings.

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<sup>58</sup> Sujit Mukherjee, A Dictionary of Indian Literature: Beginnings-1850, Pub. Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi 110002, First Edition, 1999. Pp.86.

Tanjavur paintings are found in the following literary works-

1. Sanskrit work Prabodha Chandrodaya has a few pages of Tanjavur Paintings.
2. Marathi translations of Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata which are works of the painter Madhavaswāmi dated 1824 century C.E.
3. Paintings of gods and goddesses occur in the wooden covers of every part of an edition of the Ṛgveda made in King Sarfoji's time.

#### **2.4.6 Rajput paintings of India**

This style of Indian painting evolved and flourished, during the 18th century C.E. in the royal courts of Rājputāna. Rajput paintings depict a number of themes, events in epics like the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa's life, beautiful landscapes, and humans<sup>59</sup>. The Rajput style can be divided into two major sub-styles.

1. The Rajasthan style- The Kalām style of miniature painting that developed around Jaipur, Udaypur and Mewad.
2. The Pahādi style- The style of painting which developed in the mountainous regions of the Himalayas.

- **Rajput paintings**

The colour scheme of the Rajput paintings is very suitable for the expression of the mood of the theme. They have used bold and bright colours such as red, yellow, green, orange, blue, white and black. The appropriate use of contrast, bold and bright-coloured human figures are some of the special features of this style.

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<sup>59</sup> Kulkarni Vinayak, (1996), Bhāratīya Kalā: Udgam āṇi vikāsa, Suyog Publications, Pune, PP.87

- **Pahādi Paintings**

The style of miniature painting that developed in the mountainous regions of the Himalayas such as Kangra, Jammu, Basauli, Gaghwal, Guler, Chamba etc. is known as the Pahādi style or Kangra Kalam. Rajasthan had become the centre of social and cultural progress during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. The developments in religion, culture, literature, dance and music etc. all had their reflection in this art. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century Rajasthan and the nearby mountainous area were completely under the influence of the *bhakti* movement. All manifestations of art came to be looked upon as forms of service to God. It was the worship of Kṛṣṇa that had particularly spread far and wide. The colour scheme of the Rajput painting is very appropriate for the expression of the mood of the theme. They have used bright colours such as red, yellow, green, orange, blue, white and black. Despite the gaudiness of the colours the space, balance, division and composition made the pictures attractive.

Pahādi painting is the name given to a Paṭṭacitra style of Rajput paintings.<sup>60</sup> The illustrative work based on the life of Kṛṣṇa and the story of Uṣā and Aniruddha from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa were other notable works of art. Daśāvatāra, attributed to the mid 18th century C.E., executed by artist Mahesh<sup>61</sup> was a significant work from this school.<sup>62</sup> Pahādi paintings have been widely influenced by the Rajput paintings. With the emergence of Bhakti movement, new themes for Indian Pahādi paintings came into practice. The Śaiva-Śakta themes were supplemented by poetry and folk songs of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma. At the same time, the themes of the paintings revolved around love and devotion too. There was also an illustration of great epics, purāṇas, etc.

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<sup>60</sup>Kulkarni Vinayak, (1996), Bhāratiya Kalā: Udgam āṇi vikāsa, Suyog Publications, Pune, PP. 88-89

<sup>61</sup> As reported in [www.culturalindia.net/indian-art/paintings/](http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-art/paintings/)

<sup>62</sup> As reported in [www.ethnicpaintings.com/](http://www.ethnicpaintings.com/)

- **Bilāspur Paintings**

Bilāspur town of Himachal witnessed the growth of the Pahādi paintings around the mid-17th century C.E. Apart from the illustrations of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Rāmāyaṇa, artists also made paintings on Rumāls (coverlets) for rituals and ceremonies.

#### **2.4.7 Paṭṭacitra**

Paṭṭacitra refers to the folk paintings of the state of Orissa. 'Paṭṭa' in Sanskrit means '*reśamī vastra*' or Silk clothing and '*citra*' means paintings. The theme of Orissan painting centres round Vaiṣṇavism. Since the beginning the Paṭṭacitra culture is linked with the worship of Lord Jagannath, who was the major source of inspiration. The themes of Paṭṭacitra are mostly mythological and folk stories. Themes relate chiefly to Lord Jagannath and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu based on the 'Gīta Govinda' of Jayadeva. Most used colours are red and dark royal blue. Lord Kṛṣṇa with his flute or dancing with Rādhā in his arms or holding the mountain Govaradhana with his finger and the Daśāvatāras (PL.1, Fig. 4) are mostly depicted in the paintings.

#### **2.4.8 Kalamkāri**

Kalamkāri paintings are hand-painted tapestries and hangings in temples. The word Kalamkāri is derived from *kalam*, meaning pen; and *kāri*, meaning work. In these paintings vegetable dyes are used with strong outlines in brown and black. This kind of paintings on cloth is done in Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh also in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa and West Bengal. The paintings are made up in panels depicting a story from the ancient Indian epics and themes like Daśāvatāra (PL.1, Fig. 3). In Gujarat the main centre for Kalamkāri is Ahmedabad where in the temples the curtain of the goddess is painted

in Kalamkāri style like the *picchavāis* in Havelis. Vaghri men do the outline of the painting, and the main portion of the painting is done by the women of the Vaghri families.

#### **2.4.9 Madhubani**

Madhubani paintings or Mithilā paintings is a style of traditional Indian painting, practised in Bihar. These paintings are made on various media such as cloths, handmade paper and canvas. The main themes of Madhubani paintings contain images of Hindu gods and goddesses such as Lord Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Śiva, Durgā, Lakṣmi, Saraswati and Daśāvatāra (PL.1, Fig. 5) and so on.

The artists prepare the natural colours that are used for the paintings. Black colour is prepared by cow dung. Yellow colour is made from combining turmeric with the milk of banyan leaves. Blue colour is made from indigo and red from flower juice or red sandalwood. Green colour is extracted from the leaves. White colour is made from rice powder and orange from Palāśa flowers. Shading technique is not used while applying the colours. Always there is a double line, which is drawn as an outline and the gap between the two lines is filled with either cross or straight small lines.

#### **2.4.10 Embroidery**

Hand embroidery is an art of decorating cloth using needle and thread. It is said that the art of hand embroidery was first developed in the eastern countries including India. In India the art of hand embroidery is known as Bharatakalā. This word originates from the Sanskrit word '*bhru*' which means to fill or to complete.

Vātsyāyana has included the art of embroidery under the title '*suciwakarma*' in the list of sixty four arts in the Kāmasūtra. Indian people are religious and worship different deities in the form of idols.

The cloth made for these idols is also richly decorated with fine, delicate and colourful embroidery work.

Chamba a region in Himachal Pradesh is famous for embroidered handkerchiefs and scarves. Drawings are made on white, light yellow and orange colour cotton cloth and then embroidery work is done using silk thread and running stitch.

The art of embroidery on *rumāla* with Silk threads was practised probably from very early times. The earliest *rumāla* influenced by the Pahādi style of painting which belongs to the 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

A strong sense of pattern is seen in some of the earliest embroidered *Rumāla*. In this type of embroidery the scenes of Kṛṣṇalīlā, Rāsālīla and Daśāvātāra (PL.3, Fig. 7) etc. and also the human figures with trees, leaves, flowers etc. are included in the designs.

The Bālucarī Sārīs of East India are often reckoned with the patterning of Sun, Moon, Stars, and mythical scenes. Also the motifs of natural objects with repeating pictorial themes are embroidered in the border of a Sārī (PL.3, Fig.6a, b and c). The end piece of Sārīs or *padaras*, are the main attraction as they manifest the narrative motifs of Rāmāyaṇa.

#### **2.4.11 Koṇḍāpalli toys of Andhra Pradesh**

These hand-crafted toys got their name from the village Koṇḍāpalli. The craftsmen who make the Koṇḍāpalli toys are called *āryakṣatriyas* and this traditional art form is handed down from one generation to another. It is believed that *āryakṣatriyas* migrated to Koṇḍāpalli village around 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Koṇḍāpalli toys are made of “*tella poniki*” which is softwood. First the wooden piece is heated to make it moisture free. And then different parts

of the image are carved separately. The parts are then joined together. Sawdust and tamarind seed paste are used as glue to give finishing touches to the toys. Once done, the toy is painted with white lime colour and left to dry for one or two days. Natural vegetable dyes as well as oil paints are used to paint these toys. Koṇḍāpalli toys depict scenes from mythology and actual life. Decorated Elephants, Daśāvatāra, Lord Hanuman, wedding processions, and many other themes are depicted through these toys.

#### 2.4.12 Ganjifa

The Ganjifa playing practices in India were introduced and popularized by the Mughal emperors in the 16th century C.E., Mr. Rudy Von Leyden, an Austrian scholar opines that Ganjifa is supposed to have travelled from Persia to India. The Persian etymology '*ganj*' denotes treasure, or minted money.<sup>63</sup>

Biṣṇupur witnessed the rise of a glorious tradition of art, craft and culture since the 700 C.E. under the patronage of the Malla kings of Bankura.<sup>64</sup> The tradition reached its zenith during the reign (1565 to 1620 C.E.) of Malla king Veer Hambir, the 49th ascender to the throne<sup>65</sup>. This period can be called as the golden era of arts and classical culture. According to some scholars, under the influence of Vaiṣṇava guru Srinivāsa Āchārya, Veer Hambir was inspired to create a distinct style of art and to nurture a different type of cultural atmosphere in Biṣṇupur<sup>66</sup>. Daśābatāra Tās of Biṣṇupur was the same form of a game which is known as Daśāvatāra Ganjifa, used to be played during the time in Maharashtra. It is interesting to note that the Gangifa artists might have been influenced by the Daśāvatāra figures

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<sup>63</sup> Chitrolekha International Magazine on Art and Design, Vol. 1, No. 2, August, 2011, As reported in <http://www.chitrolekha.com/lost-game-dashabatar-taas-of-bishnupur/>, PP.83

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. P.83

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.PP.83

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.PP.83

which were used on the panels of various temples and on traditional Paṭṭacitras.

Rudy Von Leyden, an Austrian scholar<sup>67</sup> had written an article on the same subject in Marg (Vol. 3 - Issue 4, 1949) in which he had stated that "there were still a dozen families eight or ten years ago in Sawantwadi which were engaged in painting Daśāvatāra *ganjifas* with surprising vitality of design"<sup>68</sup>. Sawantwadi people claim that in *daftar* they have a letter from Nana Phadanvis who was a Prime Minister of the Peshwas, which shows in writing an appreciating the gesture of the Sawantwadi ruler for sending him the excellent *ganjiḥa* sets<sup>69</sup>.

The designs of the cards of Daśāvatāra Ganjiḥa use motifs from the ten Avatāra of Viṣṇu<sup>70</sup>. It is said in the Bhāgvata Purāṇa that by invoking the name of Vaikunṭha by gestures and even by way of joking or abuse, sins are washed away. Similarly while plying the game, it is considered very auspicious if the name of God is used by saying, "your Rama did this" or "your Brahma did that" or "your Narasiṃha lost and my Matsya won".

Daśāvatāra Sawantwadi *ganjifas* are based on Daśāvatāra. There are total 120 cards in each set of Daśāvatāra *ganjiḥa* cards. There are two picture cards and the remaining ten are numerical cards. One card illustrates the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, the other shows the image of Vazir. There is a rule for starting the play in the day time and night time. A player having Rāma *avatāra* card can start playing first in the day time and Kṛṣṇāvatāra card holder starts the play at night time. The player who plays first is called *surkyā*. During the first four decades of the

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<sup>67</sup>Desai Shivaprasad : Tumhālā Ganjiḥa māhit āhe?, Saptahik Sakal, Year 22, Issue 37, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010, Pune-2, PP. 6

<sup>68</sup> As reported in <http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/>

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. PP. 10

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. PP. 9



twentieth century C.E., the craft of Sawantwadi reached several museums in the West.<sup>71</sup>

- **Daśāvatāra Ganjifa pack**

The Citraśāla Press published a very interesting Daśāvatāra Ganjifa pack. These cards are handmade and circular in shape. The designs have a particular style of painting motifs. It was played during the time of the Peshwas. During the reign of Bajirao II, this game was brought to Vidarbha; primarily in Mahur Village of Kimwat District of Marathawada. From Mahur Village, the game came to Pune district<sup>72</sup>.

In the Citraśāla pack the ten suits are provided each named after an Avatāra. They are Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. The Rājā cards show scenes from the *avatāra* in which Viṣṇu, is shown in blue colour. The order of the ten suits of *avatāra*'s puts Kṛṣṇa in the eighth suit, this combination and order of the *avatāra* appears only in the cards of Sawantwadi in Maharashtra. All of the Pradhāns figures are shown riding on white horses while the Rājā cards show scenes from the ten *avatāra*.

- ❖ **Matsya Suit**

Viṣṇu is holding a *Śankha*, mace and *khadga* and holding the running demon, Hayagrīva, who has a sword and shield in his hands. (PL.10, Fig. 17 a)

- ❖ **Kūrma Suit**

The depiction is similar to Matsya but in this picture Viṣṇu is emerging from the mouth of a large turtle. (PL.10, Fig. 17 b)

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<sup>71</sup>Desai Shivaprasad : Tumhālā Ganjifa māhit āhe?, Saptahik Sakal, Year 22, Issue 37, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010, Pune-2, PP. 11

<sup>72</sup> As reported in <http://www.ganjifa-kishor.com>

❖ **Varāha Suit**

Varāha is shown holding a chakra, mace and sword. Clad in a brown dhoti. He is attacking the demon Hiraṇyākṣa. (PL.10, Fig. 17 c)

❖ **Narasimha Suit**

Narasimha is shown tearing up the demon Hiraṇyakaśyapu with both hands on his knees. (PL.10, Fig. 17 d)

❖ **Vāmana Suit**

Vāmana is shown holding a chhatra in one hand with the other hand extended. King Bali is seated on his throne and in the process of pouring water from a vessel. (PL.10, Fig. 17 e)

A note written by Hana Knizkova of the Naprstkovo Museum of Prague on Sawantwadi painters concludes<sup>73</sup>:

"The art of the Sawantwadi *citāris* has vanished long ago. In the year 1888 C.E. there worked only two painters; their existence was ruined by the import of articles from Europe and China. The traditional paintings of the *citāris* however, retained their character of original home-made creations, the technological process of which, and the aesthetic norms, had a close relation to the classical art of the Deccan and South India"<sup>74</sup>.

The new generations of *citāris* of Sawantwadi are today engaged in creating all those traditional craft objects, including Ganjifas.<sup>75</sup> In the seventies of the last century, a collection of Sawantwadi products were even sent for the International Exhibition where it was highly praised<sup>76</sup>. It is great to see that such a precious traditional craft of Sawantwadi has come to life once again in full glory.

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<sup>73</sup> As reported in [www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/](http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/)

<sup>74</sup> As reported in [www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/](http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/)

<sup>75</sup> Desai Shivaprasad : Tumhālā Ganjifa māhit āhe?, Saptahik Sakal, Year 22, Issue 37, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010, Pune-2, PP. 8

<sup>76</sup> As reported in [www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/](http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/)

### 2.4.13 Epigraphic Evidence

The description of Daśāvtāra is found widely, starting from stone, bronze, inscriptions, Paṭṭacitra and also in Palmleaf painting. The literary and epigraphic sources throw considerable light on Daśāvtāra of Viṣṇu. The Ajmer stone inscription<sup>77</sup> of the king Vighraharāja of the Chauhan dynasty refers to the Daśāvtāra of Viṣṇu like Kūrma, Mīna, Varāha, Nṛsimṅha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Dāśarathi- Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki.

In the inscription<sup>78</sup> at Khajuraho dated 953 C.E., a new word Puṛṣasimha is used. Here Vāsudeva is addressed in the form of boar and Puṛṣasimha, *puṛṣa* of course is used for man and *simha* is lion so that it means man-lion incarnation.

The earliest epigraphic evidence on Narasimha *avatāra* is found in the Śripura Stone inscription<sup>79</sup> of Mahāśivagupta Balārjuna of 8th century C.E. The inscription begins with an invocation to Puṛṣoṭṭama.

We also find a stone inscription engraved on the wall of the temple of Nṛsimhanāth and the Cāteśvara Temple. The Harsolm copper plate grants<sup>80</sup> of the Paramara king Siyuka open with an invocation of Lord Viṣṇu in his Narasimha incarnation.

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<sup>77</sup> Pal Bharati, The *Odisha Review*, Epigraphic Evidences of Narasingha Avatara of Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda, Published by Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha, Vol. LXVIII No.9, April 2012, Bhubaneswar – 751001, PP.85.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, PP. 86

<sup>79</sup> Pal Bharati, The *Odisha Review*, Epigraphic Evidences of Narasingha Avatara of Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda, Published by Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha, Vol. LXVIII No.9, April 2012, Bhubaneswar- 751001, PP.85

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, Pp.86

#### 2.4.14 Use of colours in Nāṭyaśāstra

The Nāṭyaśāstra takes up the topic of colour (*varṇa*<sup>81</sup>) in the chapter on *āhāryaābhinaya* (*adhyāya*- 23) in connection with the actor's make-up (*aṅgaracana*<sup>82</sup>). The presentation of the theory of primary and derivative colours has been occasioned, by subsequent description of the make-up applied on the faces and limbs of actors. It is worth examining whether the primary colours play any significant role in the choice of colours used in this make-up.

A few references to paintings and painters in the Nāṭyaśāstra, even though of supplementary relevance to the subject of this study are given for the sake of completeness.

- In the chapters (2nd and 9<sup>th</sup>), dealing with the construction of the theatre building, we find references to paintings (*citrakarma*) done on the plastered and polished surface of walls, depicting men, women and creepers etc.
- The seventh of the ten arbitrators (*praśṅika*) enjoined to assess a play is a painter (*citrakṛta*). His or her specific duty consists of observing and evaluating the use of ornaments, dresses, make-up etc. (*nepathya*) appearing in a performance. (Nāṭyaśāstra, *adhyāya*-27. 62-63)
- In another chapter the importance of songs in dramatic performances is highlighted by stating that, just as a picture without colour does not produce any beauty, a play without songs cannot become delightful. (Nāṭyaśāstra, *adhyāya*-32.)
- A painter (*citrakāra*), lastly, is mentioned as one of the members of the theatrical ensemble (*nāṭaka-maṇḍali*). (Nāṭyaśāstra, *adhyāya*-35. 105)

In view of the specific context in which colours are dealt with in the Nāṭyaśāstra it is likely that the painter's main responsibility here lay

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<sup>81</sup> Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata Muni by Babu Lala Shukla Shastri, Critically edited commentary(Part-3),Chapter23,Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi-221001. PP. 140

<sup>82</sup>Ibid. PP.136

in the application of the actor's make-up. Different colour associations mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra are culturally specific. The use of the primary colours and secondary colours (*upavarṇas*<sup>83</sup>) of painting, a physical (*aṅgaracana*) is universally valid phenomenon and allows people of different times and places to connect with its symbolism more easily. In post Nāṭyaśāstra works dealing with the fine arts the theory of four primary colours<sup>84</sup> (white, blue, yellow and red) has mostly been adopted. It is clear that the preliminary nature of the present study necessitates further research into the topics not or not adequately dealt with here. The incorporation of information on colours spread over the entire Nāṭyaśāstra can produce a huge amount of data. This information hopefully succeeds in offering a glimpse into the traditional use and theatrical application of some fundamental principles of art.

## Observations

The history of art plays a significant role in influencing and motivating artists. It provides encouragement and gives scope for creativity. There are different styles of paintings which have emerged in due course of time in different geographic locations as a result of religious and cultural impact.

It can be proved by literary references that painting was a very highly developed art in ancient India. The temples in India were painted in some way and the sculptures were also brightly coloured. There was a tradition of mural decoration in the temples.

The cave paintings of Ajanta were discovered in 1920. The Ajanta paintings reflect accurately the design work in the weaving of the fine

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<sup>83</sup> Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata Muni by Babu Lala Shukla Shastri, Critically edited commentary(Part-3),Chapter23,Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi-221001.PP.137

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Pp. 136

Indian muslin, embroidery and brocade work on various materials. These paintings reflect an emphasis on Buddhism.

The literary and epigraphic sources throw considerable light on Daśāvtāra of Viṣṇu. The Indian art that rendered religious themes like Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Daśāvatāra also shared a common pool of symbols. For instance, in all the Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist themes alike, the *cakra* and the *padma* similarly there was a common set of hand gestures (*mudrā*) by the position of fingers, hands, and limbs; and by stance of images in paintings and in sculptures. We find the depiction of all the usual ten *avatāra* of Viṣṇu in Indian paintings after Gupta period.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries Rajasthan became the centre of social and cultural growth. The religious literature had a great impact on art. Indian art and literature reflected the social life and religious beliefs. Taking inspiration from the Vaiṣṇavabhakti movement and traditional devotional attitude the artists portrayed the mythological stories.

Many local styles of painting were prevalent in Rajasthan and the mountainous regions of the Himalayas. Moghal Empire sought refuge in this region and they brought along with them the Moghal art style. These ‘*Kalams*’ are recognised in two distinct styles viz. the Rajasthani and the Pahādi.

The miniature painting style could not flourish in Maharashtra. One can find references of Nana Phadanavis having brought samples of miniature paintings from the North. Nana Phadanavis had got wall paintings done in his *wādā* at Menavali. Interestingly one can observe the similar Daśāvatāra painting patterns in the entrance lobby of Śānivār-wāḍā at Pune. These paintings reveal the miniature painting influence.

In the folk art of Jingari in Sawantwadi a style known as the Ganjifa was well known. In this art the Daśāvatāra motifs are of great importance.

It is especially relevant to point out here that the application of colours in the Daśāvatāra paintings needs to be examined with reference to its practical use in Daśāvatāra dance- drama. The kind of symbolism of colour, or the language of colour associations, as in the Kathakali dance-drama of Kerala, does not seem to have developed in this context. The paintings are undoubtedly iconographically correct and we can see that the theory has been followed practically in Daśāvatāra dance- drama of Maharashtra. Thus, Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu are blue or Bluish-black; the garments that Kṛṣṇa wears or the objects that he carries are according to iconographical concept. Another point of concern is the elements which constitute the supporting elements and varied stances and gestures etc. that the painter or the sculptor must frequently have had in mind. Thus, the fragmented experience the paintings now offer to the present-day viewers can only approximate what they must have yielded to the viewers of the age to which they first belonged. Paintings and sculptures of the Daśāvatāra have influenced the attire, make-up and postures of the actors of Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka.

The study of the Daśāvatāra in Indian art and artist's contemplation on it has thus been important in the progress made in the different modes of visual interpretations of the Daśāvatāra so far.

## 2.5 Daśāvatāra Sculptures

### 2.5.1 Introduction

Indian art of sculpture, painting, dance and theatre is like a pictorial script which expresses the subtle thought of its mythology and philosophy. Indian sculptures evoke visions of dance movement of gods and human beings. The solid rock is made to live and give impression that nothing is static. Ideas of time and space are woven in to rock which seems to grow and expand with dynamic energy. Possessed of aesthetic sensibility, one cannot but appreciate the technical skill and imaginative power with which these sculptures are moulded. The relationship of Indian sculpture, painting and dancing can be analyzed from many angles.

An attempt has been made here to analyze the similarities of content (theme) and form in regard with the Daśāvatāras without going into the differences of opinion between the different authorities of the Śilpaśāstras and the Nāṭyaśāstra.

Ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are represented in Indian plastic art in several ways. These sculptures show us, visibly in plastic form, the exact nature and the development of stylization in dance and drama during different period of history. Sources for the discussion made here, include the description of Daśāvatāra images from the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), *Khaṇḍa* III, temples dedicated to different *avatāras* of Viṣṇu and sculptured images of Daśāvatāras in Maharashtra region.

The importance of *Khaṇḍa* III of Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa lies in the incorporation of the topics of fine arts including literary art and architecture, sculpture as also painting and dancing as they were



practiced in ancient India, particularly in the Gupta Age. Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa Adhyāyas 44 to 85, describe Pratimālakṣaṇa. The word Pratimālakṣaṇa means rules for proportion of *Pratimā* (image). It describes iconographic features of divine beings in terms of religion and philosophy. It provides us with important clues for interpreting and understanding religious sculptures.

The *Pratimālakṣaṇa* attempts to describe the icons of many major and minor Hindu deities of ancient India with Viṣṇu, as the central figure. In *Adhyāya* 44 and 47 Viṣṇu is described in detail. According to Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Viṣṇu should be represented as seated on Garuda. He has four faces and eight arms. (The text of verses 11, 12 and 13 of *Adhyāya* 44 though not satisfactory, give the following description.) – The eastern face is that of the Sun, Southern of Narasimha, Western of Kapila, and Northern of Varāha. His right hand carries an arrow, a rosary, a club and a sword. His left hand carries a shield, a plough-share, a bow and a disc. The last *adhyāya* of *Pratimālakṣaṇa* describes Viṣṇu as Vāsudeva in detail.<sup>85</sup>

In *Adhyāya* 78 we find the description of Narasimha Avatāra. It says that Narasimha has thick shoulders, waist and neck. The middle part of his body and his belly are lean. He has the face of a lion and the body of a man and has a halo round him. He wears a blue garment and is adorned with ornaments. His face and mane are surrounded with flames and stands in *ālīḍha* pose. He should be represented as tearing the bosom of Hiraṇyakaśyapu with his sharp nails. It is interesting to note that the text also explains another ways of representing Narasimha<sup>86</sup> : as sitting at ease on the lion-seat and also he may be made with all ornaments or void of ornaments. Here, the great Lord

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<sup>85</sup> Shah Priyabala, Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa, Third Khanda, Vol. II, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961,pg.141, PP. 157

<sup>86</sup> *ibid* – PP. 158

Viṣṇu assuming the form of Narasimha is named Jñyāna or knowledge and the demon king Hiranyakaśyapu represents *ajñyāna* or ignorance.

Adhyāya 79 describes Varāha aspect of Viṣṇu. Varāha is the embodiment of might and by his power he lifts up the earth on the tip of his tusk. He is to be represented in another way, as a human boar form called as Nṛvarāha (PL. 17, Fig. 1) i.e. human body with the face of a boar and should be represented on Śeṣa.<sup>87</sup>

The last Adhyāya of Pratimālakṣṇa is called Devodyāna Rūpa Nirmāṇa. The idea seems to present a collective description of all the gods. In this the first 60 verses are devoted to the description of Viṣṇu in his various aspects along with his attendants & implements.

Vāmana should have crooked limbs and fat body. He should carry a staff. His colour is dark like *dūrvā* grass and wears black antelope skin.

Trivikrama in colour resembles the colour of the water-laden cloud. He bears a staff and a noose and a *śaṅkha* on his lower lip (as if blowing).

The form of Kṛṣṇa has been described along with Hari, the son of Varūna, Haṁsa, Matsya and Kūrma who should have their natural forms. But Janārdana should be shown as a horned fish. Or he should have the form of a beautiful woman and should be decorated with all ornaments. She should carry a pot of nectar in her hand and giving large gifts.

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<sup>87</sup> Shah Priyabala, Viṣṇudharmottara-Puraṇa, Third Khanda, Vol. II, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961, PP. 162

Rāma Bhārgava i.e. Paraśurāma, son of Bhṛgu should be so represented as to make him difficult to look at on account of his matted locks of hair. He wears antelope skin and has an axe in his hand.

Rāma Dāśarathi i.e. the son of Daśaratha should be represented with the royal insignia, Similarly Bharata, Lakṣamana and Śaṭṛghna should be represented but without a *mauli* (crest).

Balarāma, also identified as Saṁkarṣaṇa, carries a plough-share and a pestle. He is of white colour. He wears Kuṇḍalas in his ears and wears dark blue garments. His eyes are intoxicated with drinks.

These manifestations should be represented after knowing their functions and consulting the scripture. It is also mentioned that it's impossible to describe in detail the manifestations of Viṣṇu, the god of gods.

### 2.5.2 Attributes of Viṣṇu and his Avatāra represented on their images as given in the Viṣṇudharmottara<sup>88</sup>

Images	Hands	Weapons		Other attributes
		Right	Left	
Viṣṇu	8	An arrow, a rosary, a club	A skin, a garment, a bow	

<sup>88</sup> Priyabala Shah, Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Khaṇḍa III, Vol. II, oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961, University Publications Sales Unit, Baroda-I, PP.164

Narasimha	4	The conch, wheel	Club, lotus	Piercing the heart of Hiranyakashipu with sharp nails.
Vāmana	4	A staff		Having narrow joints and ready for study.
Trivikrama	4	Staff, Noose and Conch		
Rāma (i.e. Paraṣurāma)	4	An axe		Matted locks of hair.
Bala (i.e. Balarāma)	2	Carrying the ploughshare and the club		Eyes dilated through wine.
Vāsudeva	2	Sun	Moon	
Samkarṣaṇa	2	Club	ploughshare	

The contribution of the third *khaṇḍa* of Viṣṇudharmottara is in understanding ancient art and religion and the first attempt to make anthropomorphic concepts of gods and goddesses superhuman which has resulted in giving them huge forms with a metaphysical and a spiritual interpretation.

There may have been the spiritual influences of the Buddhist and Jain thought in the age of Viṣṇudharmottara but we do not find Buddha's representation as Viṣṇu's Avatāra in the Pratimālakṣaṇa.

### **2.5.3 A brief account of a few sculptures which illustrate some of the Avatāra mentioned in the Daśāvatāra list.**

The ten Avatāras carved in a row on stone slabs were usually placed in different parts of the vaiṣṇava shrines as decorative reliefs. They were also represented on one side of the small stone or metal plaques known as Viṣṇu *paṭṭas* (PL.17, Fig.2) found in Bengal region. Separate representations of many of them are also known, though some of them

were more frequently singly represented than the others. Varāha, Narasimha and Vāmana as separate figures are more common than the others, and they had sometimes independent shrines of their own in Vaiṣṇava religious establishments. None of the separate or group representations, however, go back to a period earlier than the Gupta age; the images of Saṁkarṣana-Balarāma of the Kuṣāṇa age (PL. 17, Fig. 3) were found in the Mathura region<sup>89</sup>. Some of the Gupta inscriptions either record the construction of independent shrines in honour of some of the Avatāras, or refer to the myths they illustrate.<sup>90</sup> The Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha Avatāras, were originally associated with Brahmā Prajāpati, but with the development of the Vaiṣṇava cult they were transferred to their composite god. In his Fish (Matsya) incarnation, the god rescued the Vedas and the nuclei of the universe from destruction in the deluge, and in his Tortoise (Kūrma) incarnation, he supported the mountain Mandāra used by the Devas and Asuras as the churning rod when they churned the ocean. These two incarnations are represented in two ways, either in a purely theriomorphic form or as hybrid forms in which the upper half is human and the lower half, animal. We cannot find any Vaiṣṇava emblem in its purely theriomorphic representations of these two Avatāras. But in their hybrid forms, the upper human part holds the usual attributes in the four hands. The Boar (Varāha) incarnation is represented in several ways, either in theriomorphic form or in hybrid form. But in this form the hybridity lay in the head alone, all the rest of the body being shown as human. The Eran Inscription of the time of Toramana engraved on the chest of a red sand stone image of a Boar represents Viṣṇu in his Varāha Avatāra. Varāha is lifting the earth and the mountains are trembling. Many such figures of the Varāha Avatāra have been discovered in different parts of Northern India.

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<sup>89</sup> Joshi N.P., *Bharatiya Murtishastra*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, (1979), Pub. A.A.Kulkarni, Controller, prakashan samiti. U.B.P. Board, Pune-30, PP. 75

<sup>90</sup> Jitendra Nath Banerjia, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Ed.1986, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, PP.412

A comparison between the Varāha reliefs of Udayagiri near Bhilsa, Madhya Pradesh (PL.17, Fig. 4) and in Badami (PL.17, Fig. 5) will show the difference in the treatment of the same motif. The south Indian artists of the early Chālukya period introduced more finesse. The Mahābalipūram composition (7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), illustrates the same theme. The Pallava artist has more emphasis on the aspect of loving reunion between the god and his divine consort Bhūmidevī than on laying stress on the forceful act of her deliverance. Two other types of Varāha Avatāra, Yajna (PL.17, Fig. 6) and Pralaya Varāha are mentioned by Rao on the authority of the Vaikhanasāgama. In the former the god is shown seated in *lalitāsana* on a lion seat, accompanied by his two consorts Lakṣmi and Bhū, and in the latter sitting in the same pose he is attended only by Bhūdevī.<sup>91</sup>

The Narasiṃha Avatāra, in the list of the Daśāvatāras, was always represented in a hybrid form. The name is a compound of *Nara* (man) and *siṃha* (lion), the face is only that of an animal and all the other parts of the body are human. The story behind the primary figure of this incarnated form of Viṣṇu is well known. One of the several attributive epithets of the Avatāra, viz., and *sthaṇa* (from the word *sthaṇa* meaning a column) is significant. The god came out of a column when it was broken in anger by the demon Hiraṇyakaśyapu, a great hater of Viṣṇu. Many reliefs depicting this theme have been recovered from various parts of India. A large number of them represent either the combat between the god and the demon or the killing of Hiraṇyakaśyapu by Narasiṃha.<sup>92</sup>

Many other north and south Indian sculptures in stone and bronze represent the same theme. E.B. Havell remarks about the Ellora relief:

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<sup>91</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007, PP. 47

<sup>92</sup>Ibid, PP. 48-49.

(PL.18, Fig. 7) “The sculptor has chosen the moment when the terrific apparition of the man-lion rushes forth to seize Hiraṇyakaśyapu, who was taken unawares and with the mocking taunt still on his lips, makes a desperate effort to defend himself”; He speaks highly about the technical strength and imaginative power manifest in the treatment of the subject.

The Vaiṣṇava devotees however do not seem to have been inclined always to depict this aspect of Narasimha in *ugra* or terrific form (PL.18, Fig. 8). Viṣṇu and most of his aspects were pre-eminently gods of love, and whatever deeds of destruction were associated with in some of his forms were acts of grace and deliverance, and these were rarely represented in iconographical art. They are more often shown in their graceful form with their consorts, such as Lakṣmi Narasimha (PL.18, Fig. 9).

According to the Vaikhanasāgama characterisation of Narasimha and Kevala Narasimha, he is a god of peace, tranquillity and yogic meditation. Such a peaceful Narasimha is shown in one of the Gupta terracotta seals.<sup>93</sup> This sort of Narasimha again is illustrated by the Badami relief (PL.18, Fig. 10). A four-armed Narasimha seated in *sukhāsana* on a lotus holding *cakra*, *gadā* and *śaṁkha* (the front left hand resting on the left knee) with probably Prahlāda in the right corner paying respects to his god is shown carved inside a *caitya* window niche in the Gupta temple of Deogarh. The stone figure of Kevala Narasimha from Halebidu depicts the god seated with slightly raised legs and *yogapatta* (PL.18, Fig. 11), and a fierce-eyed lion-face. Its *prabhāvali* contains the tiny figures of the Daśāvatāra.

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<sup>93</sup>Jitendra Nath Banerjia, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Ed.1986, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, PP.417

Vāmana, Viṣṇu's fifth Avatāra (PL.18, Fig. 12) has clear Vedic affiliation. The Sculptures illustrating the Vāmana incarnation fall under two categories<sup>94</sup>,

1. The dwarf (Vāmana, PL.18, Fig. 13) and
2. The huge colossus (*virātarūpa*) about to take three steps (Trivikrama, PL.18, and Fig. 14).

The texts enjoin that Vāmana should be Panchatāla (according to Saṅgīta Ratnākara 1 Tāla = 12 fingers) in measurement, two-armed, holding an umbrella and a staff, and should appear as a teen-aged Brahmacārin, while the Trivikrama Virātarūpa should be four or eight-armed with right or left foot firmly planted, the other leg thrown upwards as if to attack the heavens. In Mahābalipuram relief (PL.19, Fig. 15) the scene of the actual granting of the land is not depicted. The Badami relief also, though it does not contain many of the accessory figures present in the other, illustrates this scene. Both the Badami and the Mahābalipuram figures of Trivikrama are eight-armed. Separate figures of Vāmana are very rare, and such figures are almost always four-armed, the four hands holding the usual Vaiṣṇava emblems.

The next three incarnations (the human ones) are Bhārgava Rāma (Parśurāma), Rāma and Balarāma. The mythology associated with the first clearly points out that he was the symbol of the militancy of the Brāhmaṇs against the Kṣatriyas. He is said to have destroyed the Kṣatriyas as many as 21 times. Dāśarathi Rāma's character as an ideal of manhood and the story of Rāmāyaṇa is well known. It appealed to the imagination of the people of India as an ideal of manhood. A confusion of ideas about Balarāma's exact identity, however, remained in the minds of the Indian myth-makers, for different texts present him

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<sup>94</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007, PP.51-52.



in different forms. In one form Balarāma is a sort of a bucolic deity connected with agriculture and harvests, in another he is the incarnation of Ananta Nāga, a companion of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu, and last, though not the least, he was the elder brother of Vāsudeva himself in which character he was first a Vīra and then a Vyūha. Again, in the list of the ten incarnations his place is sometimes, though rarely, occupied by Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa himself.

There are not many variations in the iconographic types of these human incarnations (PL.21, Fig. 16 a,b,c)

Paraśurāma, as this form of his name indicates, should hold a battle-axe (*paraśu*) in his right hand, and in the Daśāvātāra slabs he is invariably shown as two-armed. Some texts, however, describe a four-armed variety of his image; such images are separate representations, and are extremely rare. Thus, the four-armed image of this Avatāra from Ranihati (Dacca) (PL.19, Fig. 17) is of unique importance; its front right hand holds a battle-axe, the remaining hands holding a *śaṅkha*, a *cakra* and a *gadā*<sup>95</sup>.

Images of Dāśarathi Rāma are usually devoid of any complexities. Though the Gupta inscriptions do not refer to Rāma incarnation, reliefs illustrating episodes of Rama's story and belonging to the Gupta period are still extant in the Daśāvātāras. In the reliefs of the early and late mediaeval periods, Rama is almost invariably depicted as two-armed, his hands holding a bow and an arrow (PL.19, Fig. 18 a- b). Separate cult images of him in stone and bronze of a comparatively late period are known. In these he is usually shown accompanied by his queen Sīta, his devoted brother Lakṣmaṇa and his faithful devotee Hanumān. Scenes from the Rāmayaṇa are very

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<sup>95</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007, PP.53.

frequently found illustrated in the early and late mediaeval temple walls in India.

The life-history of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma is fully told in the Harivaṁśa (a Mahābhārata supplement), in the Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas and in many other texts. In a sense they are the real Avatāras, for according to the epic and Purāṇic tradition they came to live among men for the attainment of virtuous ends. The Matsya Purāṇa says that 'the placing of a gadā in the left hand of Viṣṇu in his Kṛṣṇa Avatāra is meritorious' (BP.10. 258) The stories connected with the childhood and youthful days of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were already well known in the early centuries of the common era. The sculptures on some mediaeval Vaiṣṇava shrines at Tripuri (modern Tewar in Madhya Pradesh), and the late mediaeval temple carvings of various other parts of India illustrate many Kṛṣṇāyana as well as Rāmāyaṇa scenes. Separate sculptures of Kṛṣṇa (PL.19, Fig. 19- Somanathpura) are also known from comparatively early times. The theme of the divine acts of love was emphasised in many of them, and some outstanding works of art were produced in wood, stone and paint.

Balarāma's importance in the cult is proved by literary as well as archaeological data. One of the earliest Brāhmanical images is of Saṁkarṣaṇa which was found at Mathura, and it is now in the collection of the Lukhnow Museum. The god stands under a canopy of serpent hoods, holds a pestle (*musala*) and a ploughshare (*hala*) in his hands, wears a short *dhoti*, usual ornaments and a massive turban; the right leg is slightly bent at the knee. The last two incarnations of Viṣṇu are seldom, if at all, represented separately.

Buddha is mostly omitted in south Indian Daśāvatāra relief, his place being occupied by Kṛṣṇa (PL.19, Fig. 20). The exponents of Brāhmanical Hinduism reviled, in no uncertain terms, the religious

system centring round the great reformer, but could not ignore him altogether. The Bhāgavatas came to regard him as one of the incarnations of their god who, according to them, incarnated himself in the world as Māyāmoha ('the arch Deluder') to create confusion among the Daityas by preaching false and anti-Vedic doctrines among them and thus cause their destruction<sup>96</sup>.

The Bṛhatsamhitā describes his image in this manner: 'Buddha should have the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet marked with lotus, he should be placid in form and his hair should be very short (*sunica*; a variant reading is *sunita* meaning "well-arranged" – both readings would suit a Buddha image (PL.19, Fig. 21): he should be seated on a lotus seat and should appear as the father of the whole world.<sup>97</sup> In the Daśāvatāra slabs, Buddha is almost invariably shown standing, with his right hand in the assurance pose.

Viṣṇu is yet to incarnate himself in the end of the Kali Yuga (as he appeared in the end of the Dvāpara Yuga for the establishment of righteousness and virtue) as Kalki the son of the Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇuyāsa. Two varieties of Kalki's images are described in the Hayaśīrṣa Pancarātra and in the Agnipurāṇa, as two-armed and four-armed also. The two-armed variety described in the Viṣṇudharmottara as 'a powerful man angry in mood, riding on horseback with a sword in his raised hand' (PL.20, Fig. 22). It can be recognised in the last figure of the Daśāvatāra slab. Separate figures of the Kalki *avatāra* are not known.

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<sup>96</sup> Jitendra Nath Banerjia, Development of Hindu Iconography, Ed.1986, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, PP.424

<sup>97</sup> Jitendra Nath Banerjia, Development of Hindu Iconography, Ed.1986, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, PP.424

## 2.5.4 Temples dedicated to different Avatāras of Viṣṇu in India

Temples are a comprehensive reflection of all fine arts. The ornamental sculptures and paintings therein and also the artefacts are always in harmony with each other and they reflect the same idea. It becomes impossible to consider them separately. Consequently, to review the location and to study the temples dedicated to different Avatāra of Viṣṇu also becomes the part of this study. The temple at Deogarh in Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh built around 500 C.E is the only temple which is known as ‘Daśāvatāra Temple’. This Viṣṇu temple was renamed as Daśāvatāra Temple by the archaeologist Cunningham. Mamlapuram inscription of 8<sup>th</sup> century mentions incarnations of Viṣṇu.

Kailāsanātha temple and Daśāvatāra cave at Ellora bear the sculptural representations of some Avatāra of Viṣṇu. The Daśāvatāra cave number fifteen at Ellora in Maharashtra was begun as a Buddhist monastery, created during Rāṣṭrakūṭa period. It has a free-standing monolithic *mandapa* in the centre of an open court. And behind the *mandapa* there is a two-storied excavated temple. The plan of the temple is closely related to cave numbers eleven and twelve. There are huge sculptural panels between the walls and columns<sup>98</sup> on the upper floor illustrate a wide range of themes, which include some *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. The finest relief of this cave is the one depicting the death of Hiranyakaśyapu, where Viṣṇu, emerges from a pillar in *sthaṇa* Narasimha<sup>99</sup> form. The huge panels outside the Kailāsnātha temple depict Varāha, Narasimha and Trivikrama (Vāmana).

In Bhopal, the group of temples consist of shrines dedicated to ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. Formerly they had the images of one or two

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<sup>98</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007. PP.46

<sup>99</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007. PP.49

incarnations of Viṣṇu but now they are in ruined condition. The temples are dated to 9th and 10th century C.E.<sup>100</sup>

In the earliest works of religious art Buddha was represented not in form of a human figure but in an aniconic form. Still earlier in the Vedic times, there were no temples either. The first image of Buddha and and purāṇic gods appear on the coins<sup>101</sup> of the Kuṣāṇa's (early centuries of the first millennium C.E.). The Gāndhāra style is heavily borrowed from Greek themes. The sculptures of the initial period of the Kuṣāṇa's period also show a heaviness and solidness of figure.

### ❖ Matsya Avatāra Temples of Lord Viṣṇu

There are only a few temples dedicated to Matsya Avatāra of Lord Viṣṇu. Śrī Matsya Mūrti Temple in Thuvarimaan Agraharam, situated near Madurai in Tamil Nadu is believed to be the *avatāra sthala*<sup>102</sup> of Matsya Mūrti. Nagalapuram Veda Narayana Swamy Temple is another Matsya Avatāra temple situated near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. Matsya *maṇḍala* of Badami Cave No.2.

The cave No. 2 of Badami is dedicated to Viṣṇu and the Matsya *maṇḍala* which has a unique representation of a fish arranged as the spokes of a wheel, radiating out from the central circle. It is probably related to the incarnation of Viṣṇu as a fish<sup>103</sup>. The purpose behind using a fish motif is only decoration. The significance of the *maṇḍala* is generally based on aspects like symbolism, numerology, and sacred geometry that are used as codes. Hence, the study of the *maṇḍalas* and representation of the symbols related to the Daśāvatāra theme would be a very interesting one.

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<sup>100</sup> As reported in [www.asibhopal.nic.in/monument/vidisha](http://www.asibhopal.nic.in/monument/vidisha)

<sup>101</sup> Shailendra Bhandare : Gods on Gold Divine Representation and Kushan Coinage, *Heritage India*, Vol. 5, Issue 3, Aug. 2012- Oct 2012, PP. 88-93.

<sup>102</sup> Chidbhavananda Swami : *Facets of Brahman or The Hindu Gods*, Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Tirupparaitturai-639115.

<sup>103</sup> Rekha Rao, Science and Golden Ratios in Maṇḍala Architecture, Pub. D. K. Printworld (P) ltd., New Delhi- 15, 2011.

### ❖ Temples dedicated to the Kūrma Avatāra

There is a Viṣṇu temple in Shrikūrmapatak village located at a distance of almost 19 km. from Kalinga Nagar on the sea coast, enshrining Śrikūrma Avatāra (the tortoise incarnation of Viṣṇu). Today it is located in Srikākulam district of Andhra Pradesh, known as Nagari Katak.

### ❖ Temples dedicated to Varāha

The independent temples exclusively dedicated to Varāha form of Viṣṇu are very few. The temple at Eran is one of the earliest temples dedicated to Varāha. Eran is an ancient Indian historical city in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh state. The Varāha temple was constructed in Eran during the Gupta period. The identity of this god was made clear in the stone pillar inscription of the reign of Buddhagupta (476 C.E.). The remains at various places like Udayagiri, Eran etc. show that the Gupta kings were Hindus and they worshipped Viṣṇu in different forms<sup>104</sup>.

The Varāha Lakṣmi Narasimha Swāmī temple near Tirumala Venkaṭeśwara Temple, near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh is considered to be a very ancient temple. Pilgrims first worship Lord Varāha and then Lord Venkaṭeśwara. In Haryana, Varāha Temple is located in Varāha Village in Jind District. The temple has a *swayambhu mūrti* of Varāha. There are a few temples dedicated to Varāha in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh also. The Varāha temple located at Khajuraho has a rectangular plan with its foundation on a rock. The image of Varāha stands in the centre of the shrine. A similar image of the Varāha idol

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<sup>104</sup> Monumental Remains From Eran (Gupta Period), Dr. Nagesh Dubey : *Eran Ki Kala*, Sagar, M.P.India, 1998 ,pp 21, Dr. Mohan Lal chadhar : *Eran Ki Tamrapashan Saskriti*, Krisna Publication, Sagar, (M.P.) India, 2009 .pp 5

in the Khajuraho temple; stands in a museum in the Mrganayani's Palace, Gwalior.<sup>105</sup>

The concept of ten incarnations of Viṣṇu was widely prevalent in Orissa since the seventh century. In this connection mention must be made that the worship of Varāha referred in the copper plate of Dharmaraja of Sailodhava dynasty and other individual and collective images in coastal Orissa, also speak in short about the prevalence of Daśāvatāra worship in Orissa before the advent of Jayadeva, the celebrated Poet of Gīta-Govinda.

### ❖ Temples dedicated to Narasimha

Ahobilam or Ahobalam is a major centre of pilgrimage in South India, located in the Nandyal Taluka of Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh. According to a local legend, this is where Lord Narasimha blessed Prahlāda and killed the demon Hiranyakaśyapu and for Vaiṣṇava devotees it is one of the 108 *Divya Desams*.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasihma Swāmī, Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh is on the rock hill (*konda*). Shri Varāha Narasimha Swāmī is the combination of Varāha *avatāra* and Narasimha *avatāra*. When Prahlāda was thrown into the sea by Hiranyakaśyapu, Shri Varāha Narasimha Swāmī protected him and raised a mountain which is known as Simhachalam.

In Shri Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam at Saligrama, Udupi district, Karnataka the Idol of Narasimha is in Yogānanda posture. This Narasimha idol is there from the 8th century according to historians. Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmī Temple at Rūpena Agrahāra,

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<sup>105</sup>Nagar Shanti Lal : *Varāha in Indian Art, Culture and Literature*, Aryan Book International, New Delhi, 1992.

Bangalore in Karnataka is the only temple in India which has "Narasimha Meru" (PL.20, Fig. 23) belonging to an ancient period.

A hilltop fortress Melekote [(*mele-* top) and (*kote-* fort)] at Nagamangala in Mysore district, Karnataka state is the famous site of Sri Yoga Narasimha.

It is said that Lord Narasimha after killing Hiranyakāśyapu, proceeded to kill a demon named Jalāsura. Who was a staunch devotee of Lord Śiva. After he was killed by Lord Narasimha, Jalāsura turned into water and started flowing to the Lord's feet. To this day water keeps flowing to the Lord's feet and fills the cave temple of Śri Narasimha Swāmī Zarni at Bidar district in Karnataka.

In Maharashtra, there is a temple of Lord Narasimha in Nittur, (Taluka - Chandgad, Dist. Kolhapur). It is said that this temple was built by Pāṇḍvas when they were in exile. This ancient temple is engraved in a big solid rock.

In Tamilnadu, there is Shri Yoga Narasimha temple at Kanchipuram and there are many temples of Narasimha in other places like Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Indore, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa in India.

### ❖ Temples dedicated to Vāmana Avatāra

Some of the Vāmana temples located in South India are Mithranandapuram Vāmanamūrthy Temple in Kerala, Thrikkakara Temple in Cochin (Kerala), and Ulagalantha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram. Vāmana temple located at Eastern Group of Temples at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh as also Ulagalantha Perumal Temple in Tirukoilur in Tamil Nadu.



### ❖ Temples dedicated to Paraśurāma

In South India, at the holy place Pajaka near Udupi, there is one major temple dedicated to Paraśurāma. He, the saviour of the Konkan coast, is also worshipped in a temple at Pedhe Paraśurāma, Chiplun in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district. The people of Konkan call their land 'Paraśurāma Bhūmi' or the land of Paraśurāma. There is a famous Paraśurāma temple in Trivandrum at Thiruvallam. It is also believed to be the place where Paraśurāma's axe was thrown in the Arabian Sea to claim Kerala. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Paraśurāma in Khatti, near Phagwara in Punjab and also in Rajkot (Gujarat). The Paraśurāma Swāmī Temple is in Thiruvallam, near Thiruvananthapuram. This temple is situated on the banks of the river Karamana. This two thousand year old temple is the only temple in Kerala dedicated to Sri Paraśurāma *avatāra*. There are temples of Paraśurāma also in Harpur, Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh) and Goa.

Recently in the year 2010 C.E., a big statue of Bhagwan Paraśurāma has been installed in Phalodi (Jodhpur, Rajasthan) near Śivsar *talāo* (pond). According to Indian mythology, Jalalabad, Shahjahanpur is known as the birth place of Lord Paraśurāma. His father Maharshi Jamadgni had his Ashram in this place where Paraśurāma was born. His birth place is still called "Reṇuka Kuti". Reṇuka was his mother. Hence some people also call Jalalabad as Paraśurāmapuri (a city of lord Paraśurāma).

### ❖ Temples dedicated to Rāma

In the Daśāvatāra reifes of the early and late mediaeval periods, Rāma is almost invariably depicted as two-armed, his hands holding a bow and an arrow. Seperate images in stone and bronze of a comparatively late period are known. In these images he is usually shown accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and his *bhakta* Hanumāna. Scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa are very frequently found illustrated in the early

and late mediaeval temple walls. The earliest known representation of Rāmakathā is available in terracotta, discovered from Kausambi in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh, and kept in Allahabad museum<sup>106</sup>. This terracotta has been identified by R. Sengupta and ascribed to Second Century B.C.E. If we go through the chronological development of the early, mediaeval and later sculpture we may understand that two major types of sculptures were prevalent.

1. As an Epic Hero
2. As a Supreme Being

The *tribhaṅga* variety of image is meant for the devotional worship and personification of Epic Rāma in the form of Supreme Being.

### ❖ Temples dedicated to Kṛṣṇa

Representations in temples often show Kṛṣṇa standing in Vaiṣṇava *sthānaka* pose. He may be alone, or with associated figures like his brother Balarāma and sister Subhadrā, or Rukmini or with his gopī-consort Rādha. Kṛṣṇa is also depicted and worshipped as a small child (*Bāla Kṛṣṇa*), crawling on his hands and knees or dancing, often with butter in his hand being called *Laddu Gopāl*. These regional variations in the iconography of Kṛṣṇa are seen in his different forms, such as Jagannātha of Orissa, Viṭhobā of Maharashtra and Śrīnāthji in Rajasthan.<sup>107</sup> In Maharashtra, Viṭhobā (PL.20, Fig. 24) is not only viewed as a form of Kṛṣṇa, but also by some scholars considered as Viṣṇu, Śiva and Gautama Buddha according to various traditions, as mentioned in a book *Śrī-Viṭthal: Ek Mahāsamanvaya* written by an eminent scholar R.C. Dhere.

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<sup>106</sup> Gaur Anand Prakash: *Rāma in Ancient Indian Sculptures*, Publishing Corporation, A division of BRPC India Ltd., Delhi 110052, 2006, First edition, PP.16

<sup>107</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007, PP.55-56.

### **2.5.5 South Indian Bronze Daśāvatāra Statues and metal Handicrafts (PL.22 and 23, Fig. 28)**

Art and handicrafts are important Tourism Products of India. Handicrafts are having a specialty of Indian workmanship and reflect the culture of each and every place of a country.

Handicrafts have a glorious tradition and they are the symbols of people's culture and form part of a great heritage of the traditional art.

Bronze statues have been made, at least in India, since the period of the Indus Valley Civilization (3500B.C.E.). The very well known statue of the dancing girl of Mohenjo Daro is of bronze. Temples in India and abroad regularly commission sculptors to craft idols. They are the examples of the enduring art and perfection, inspiring devotees of the Divine with the purity of their forms.

Bronze Daśāvatāra Statues are the eye-catching masterpieces known for their immense beauty and grandeur. In these Daśāvatāra Statues, the lord Viṣṇu is in his various forms i.e. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Narasimha and others are very famous. The artistry of these Bronze Daśāvatāra Statues<sup>108</sup> is very much superior where even the tiniest detail has been carefully contrived. The magnificent Statues of Daśāvatāra have been carved with ultimate finesse to make them look lifelike.

### **2.5.6 Daśāvatāra sculptures and temples in Maharashtra**

In Maharashtra, there are hundreds of caves, cave-temples and structural temples. This region does not possess any structural Viṣṇu temple of early mediaeval period except at Ter (Dis. Osmanabad). It can be ascribed to the 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E. The temple of Trivikrama is perhaps the earliest structural temple in the whole of the Maharashtra

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<sup>108</sup>Raghavan Padma, Narayan Savita : Traditional Iconometry, Chola Bronzes, Heritage India, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Feb.-April 2011, PP.88-89.

state<sup>109</sup>. Out of the ten *avatāra*, those of Varāha and Narasiṃha occur independently and in quite a large number. But the ten *avatāra* as a unit are shown in miniature at various places.

- **Matsya and Kūrma**

These are always depicted in the Daśāvatāra *paṭṭa* at many places. These generally occur either behind the head of Viṣṇu image or on the ceiling of the maṇḍapa. The ten incarnations are depicted on the *maṇḍovara* of the Kaṅkāleśvara temple at Bid<sup>110</sup>. Among these, Matsya and Kūrma are also given separate compartments. They are theriomorphic.

- **Varāha**

In Maharashtra independent icons of Varāha *avatāra* are available. All the icons of Varāha which are found on the exterior of the temples in Maharashtra are therianthrope representations with a boar's head and human body which can be called Nṛvarāha. The icons of Nṛvarāha are to be found at many places like Ambarnath, Anjaneri, Lonar, Bid etc<sup>111</sup>. All these are *sthānaka* or standing icons in Āliḍhāsthāna pose. The images of Yajñavarāha are found at Loni Bhapkar in Maharashtra. There is a stone image of Yajñavarāha at Pimpri Dumala temple (PL.20, Fig. 25) near Ranjangaon on Pune Aurangabad road and in the Chakan fort too.

- **Narasiṃha or Nṛsiṃha**

This is perhaps the most represented incarnation of Viṣṇu in Maharashtra. The icons of Nṛsiṃha are found throughout this region. Dr. R.C. Dhere, a well known senior scholar from Maharashtra is working on this subject. The seated icons along with the Hiranyakaśipu are more numerous than the standing ones. The icons

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<sup>109</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP. 111.

<sup>110</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP. 136

<sup>111</sup> Ibid PP.136-137

of Nṛsimha are to be found at Ramtek, Ambarnath, Anjaneri, Methi, Dharmapuri, Bid and Anwa etc<sup>112</sup>.

- **Vāmana**

The Trivikrama incarnation was very much popular up to the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. in Maharashtra as is evidenced by various representations of it which are found in the caves. The only illustration of Vāmana appears on a loose slab at Dharmapuri<sup>113</sup> (PL.20, Fig. 26). In this figure Vāmana (Baṭuka) is holding an umbrella in his left hand and the right hand is broken. King Bali is in front of him. Vāmana is receiving libations from the king who is holding a pitcher in his hand. Bali is depicted with various ornaments and guru Śukrācārya can also be seen. Dr. Dhavalikar M.K. in his book, '*Maharashtrāci Kulakathā*' refers to a temple at Ter near Osmanabad as Trivikrama temple. He stats that this temple belongs to the Sātvāhana period and is dedicated to the Vāmana incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu.

- **Paraśurāma**

There is a temple at Pedhe Paraśurāma near Chiplun in Ratnagiri district (PL.20, Fig. 27). There are three idols in the temple Kāla, Paraśurāma and Kāma. The idols of Kāla and Kāma are the symbolic representations of time and desire respectively. It is interesting to note that the only available published script of the Konkan Daśāvātāra dance-drama contains the story and characters of Kāla and Kāma. The main deity in the temple which is in the middle of the two idols is of Paraśurāma. In Konkan region at Ade, *tālukā* Dapoli and district Ratnagiri, there is a small temple dedicated to Paraśurāma. The main temple is surrounded by other temple structures, on the right there is a temple of Śiva and Reṇukā and on the left Māruti, Gaṇapati, Vetāla

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<sup>112</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP. 137

<sup>113</sup> Ibid PP.139

and Śanī. The temple was built in 1774 C.E.<sup>114</sup>. There are some temples of Bhārgava-Rāma in Sawantawadi, Ajgao and Ratnagiri in Paratavane region.

- **Rāma**

Apart from the narrative expressions from the Rāmāyaṇa on the walls and slabs of the temples, the representations of Rāma are to be found in the temples at Aundha Naganatha, Ambejogai, Lonara<sup>115</sup> and Chaphal etc.

**Rāmāyaṇa Scenes<sup>116</sup>:**

Among those from the Rāmāyaṇa, the scenes depicting Vāli-Sugrīva combat are more popular. They frequently find a place on the square member of the pillar-shafts. In the Āśrama of Vinobaji at Paunar a beautiful sculpture depicting the meeting of Rāma and Bharata has been displayed. After the meeting, Bharata is shown taking leave of his brother. The pathos of the scene is depicted realistically. These panels are supposed to be of Vākāṭaka period.

On the walls of the Bhuleśvara temple of Yawat, district Pune, are seen the scenes depicting Rāma's exile, Rāma's āśrama in the forest of Cītrakūta, Bharata's meeting with Rāma, Sītā's abduction, etc.

At Markandi, district Gadchiroli and tālukā Charmoshi, the scenes illustrating Vāli-Sugrīva battle, Sītā enamoured of the golden deer, Rāvaṇa's visit to the āśrama as an ascetic, killing of Jaṭāyu, the crowning ceremony of Rāma can be seen.

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<sup>114</sup>Ghanekar P.K., Konkanatil Paryatana, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2012), Pub. Snehal Publication, Gurudatta Sahavas, Shanivarpeth, Pune- 411030. PP.87

<sup>115</sup> Ghanekar P.K., Konkanatil Paryatana, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2012), Pub. Snehal Publication, Gurudatta Sahavas, Shanivarpeth, Pune- 411030 PP. 141

<sup>116</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple Architecture and Sculpture of Maharashtra, Published by Dr. S.V. Bhagwat, Registrar Nagpur University, Nagpur 1974, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, PP. 161

- **Balarāma**

The solitary depiction of Balarāma is to be found on the *janḡhā* of the Daitya - Sūdāna temple at Lonar<sup>117</sup>. He is shown in therianthrope form; his lower part is shown as the coils of Ādiśeṣa. The part above the waist is of a human being. He is four armed, holding a plough and a *musala* in the upper hands and *padma* and *pānapātra* in the lower ones. Above his head are seven heads of Ādiśeṣa.

- **Kṛṣṇa**

Independent icons and representations in the mythological scenes are available in Maharashtra. Intricately carved icons of Kṛṣṇa as Govardhanadhāri, Kāliya-mardana and Muralīdhara are found in the structural temples at Sinnar (Gondeśvara temple), Lonar, Jhodge etc<sup>118</sup>.

**Kṛṣṇa Story Scenes:**

The various *lilās* of Kṛṣṇa described in the Harivaṃśa and the Bhāgavat Purāṇa are also depicted in the temples in Maharashtra. Among these are those like Vatsāsuraavadha, Kāmsavadha, Kāliyā-daman, Cāṇūra Muṣṭikavadha, Kuvalayāpīḍavadha, as also scenes depicting Kṛṣṇa stealing butter and uprooting the Yamala ārjunvṛkṣas, his being tied down to the wooden mortar and his lifting of Govardhana mountain<sup>119</sup>.

- **Buddha**

Three depictions of the Buddha incarnation are available from the temples at Bid, Umarga and Pedgaon<sup>120</sup>. Therein Buddha is shown seated in the *padmāsana* and in *dhyānamudrā*.

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<sup>117</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP. 141

<sup>118</sup> Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP.140

<sup>119</sup> Deglurkar G.B.: *Viṣṇu Murte Namastubhyam*, Shri Dvarkadhish Charitable Trust, Karnala, Raigad, 2007, PP. 55.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid PP. 142

- **Kalki**

There are no independent depictions of Kalki *avatāra* from the temples. However, this *avatāra* can be seen in the group representations of the Daśāvatāra, found on a few late medieval temples<sup>121</sup>.

## **Temples dedicated to different Avatāra of Viṣṇu in Maharashtra**

### ➤ **Konkan region**

Mumbai

#### **Thane district**

Shahad- Viṭṭhala temple (Birla Mandir) Daśāvatāra depicted on the outer wall of the temple.

#### **Ratnagiri district**

Paraśurāma (constructed by Ādilśaha of Vijapur)

### ➤ **North Maharashtra**

#### **Jalgao district**

Amalner- Rāma temple

Jalgao- Rāma temple

Shendurni ( Tāluka Jamner ) Trivikrama temple ( swayambhu Murti)

#### **Dhule district**

Pimpalner- Muralidhara temple

#### **Nandurbar district**

Dhamarkheda- Rāma temple

#### **Nashik district ( Dakṣiṇ Kāśi )**

Kālārāma temple

Gorā Rāma temple

#### **Ahamadnagar district**

Nevasa- Mohini *avatāra* temple

### ➤ **Western Maharashtra**

#### **Pune district**

Nira Narasimhapur

Morgao- Ranjani (Tāluka Ambegao) Ancient temple dedicated to Narasimha

#### **Satara district**

Kuroli Siddheshwar- Rāma temple

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<sup>121</sup>Deglurkar G.B., Temple architecture and sculpture of Maharashtra, Pub., By Bhagavat S.V., Registrar Nagpur University, 1974, first edition, PP. 142



Chaphal- Rāma temple

Sitāmāi ca Dongar- Temple dedicated to Sītā

**Sangli district**

Kole Narasimhapur- Ancient temple dedicated to Narasimha

**Solapur district**

Akkalkot- Muralidhara Temple

Pandharpur- Viṭṭhala temple, Śri Rāma temple

➤ **Marathwada**

**Aurangabad district**

Paīṭhaṇ- Narasimha temple

Shiur- Ancient Rāma temple

**Jalana district**

Anva- Viṭṭhala Rukmiṇi temple

Jalna- Rāma temple

Paratur- (Ancient name Prhlādpur) Ancient temple dedicated to Narasimha

**Parbhaṇi district**

Pokharāṇi- Ancient temple dedicated to Narasimha

Narasi- Narasimha temple

Nanded- Narasimha temple (*Jāgrt*)

**Latur district**

Kharosa (Tāluka Ausā)-

Ancient cave- carvings of Narasimha and Samudramāthana etc.

**Usmanabad district**

Ter- Trivikrama Temple

**Bid district**

Manjaratha (Tāluka Mājalgao) Ancient temple dedicated to Lakṣmi-Trivikrama

➤ **Amarawati**

**Buldana district**

Mehekar- Narasimha and Viṣṇu temples

Loṇar- Daitya-sūdānaa temple

**Amarawati district**

Mozari- Śrikrṣṇa temple

**Yavatmal district**

Ghaṭāṇji- Anji- Ancient temple dedicated to Narasimha

➤ **Nagpur**

**Vardha district**

Giraḍ- Ancient Rāma temple

Kamthi- Dragon Palace Temple-Temple dedicated to Buddha

Dhapevada- Viṭṭhala Rukmiṇi temple

Ramtek- Rāma- Lakṣmaṇ temple

**Bhandara district**

Pavani- Muralidhara temple

Madgi- Ancient temple of Narasiṃha

**Chandrapur district**

Saṣṭi- Ancient Rāma temple

**Gadchiroli district**

Armori- Khobrāmendhā- Rāma temple

## 2.5.7 Observations

Indian Sculptures show us, the development of stylization in other art forms including dance and drama. The Viṣṇu temple at Deogarh built around 500 C.E. is the only temple known as Daśāvatāra Temple. Mamlapuram inscription of 8<sup>th</sup> century mentions incarnations of Viṣṇu. Kailasa temple and Daśāvatāra cave at Ellora bear the sculptural representations of some *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. There are numerous inscriptions and epigraphs referring to different *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.

We find the concept of Daśāvatāra in a developed state (the popular stereotyped list) in the central and western Indian sculptures from the medieval period. In western Indian sculptures we get many variations of Matsya and Kūrma idols. Varāha and Narasiṃha *avatāra* were popular all over India from ancient times.

Maharashtra region presents several icons depicting the incarnations of Viṣṇu. They occur in the structural temples from almost all the districts of Maharashtra. Out of the ten *avatāra*, those of Varāha and Narasiṃha occur independently and in quite a large number in the Maharashtra region. But the ten *avatāra* as a unit are shown in miniature at various places in Maharashtra.

For the last several years the attention of the scholars has been drawn to the Daśāvatāra and its depiction in various art forms like paintings,

sculptures, dance, drama and music etc. Among the different types of artists, especially the sculptors have depicted the Daśāvatāra in stones. These stories in stones on the walls and slabs of different temples throughout the country have preserved the Daśāvatāra and also educated people about the divine deeds, personalities and also the characteristics and attributes of each *avatāra*. This indicates the devotional feelings of the Indian minds towards their Almighty and Restorer.

In the cultural field, however, the growth of regional languages, devotional music, dance, painting and sculpture etc. became closely related to the *bhakti* movement. The medieval Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement was undoubtedly the most widespread, far-flung and multi-faceted movement that appeared in India. The *bhakti* movement influenced almost the whole country at different times and had a definite impact not only on religious doctrines, rituals, values and popular beliefs but on arts and culture as well. The movement also differed from one region to another. Hence, the historical background of the rise of *Saguṇa bhakti*, and its variations in different regions as also its impact on the society and its culture has to be studied in detail. Considerably more research work, however, will be needed for a proper understanding, in a historical perspective of the growth of *bhakti* movement in different regions.

Although according to the research work and study of many scholars the worship of Viṣṇu began to spread under the Gupta rule (4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E. The works pertaining to Viṣṇu *bhakti* were invariably found written in Sanskrit. The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed a forceful wave of *bhakti* movement in northern, eastern and western India, generally focussed around the worship of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as incarnations of Viṣṇu. Samartha Rāmdāsa a prominent Marathi saint and religious poet in Maharashtra refer to the Avatāra idols used for

the *Upacāra pūjā* or *Arcanā* (worshipping an image) in his *Dāsabodha*. He has emphasised the importance of *Navavidhā bhakti* in the same work, treating this topic exclusively in the fifth *Samāsa* of the tenth *Daśaka* in this work. In this chapter he mentions that images of all the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu like Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Hayagrīva can be worshipped according to the *Śāstras*.

मत्स्यकूर्मवहावमूर्ती । नृसिंहवामनभार्गवमूर्ती ।  
रामकृष्णहयग्रीवमूर्ती । देवतार्चनी पूजाव्या ॥ (Dāsabodha,4.5.9)

This indicates that at the time of Samartha Rāmdāsa there must have been a custom or practice of worshipping the images of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. *Bhaviṣya purāṇa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* also tell us about the *Daśāvatāra Vrata*, when the images of the ten incarnations are worshipped for attaining *Viṣṇuloka* after death. The worship of *Daśāvatāra* took many forms in the course of time. The *Daśāvatāra* concept and the story of incarnations of Viṣṇu is, however, deeply integrated with Indian cultural life and influenced the cultural art particularly in the Maharashtra region and manifests itself down from the folk song or *bhakti kīrtana* level to the creations like sculpture, painting, dance and drama. The pioneer artist Shyamji Nāik Kale who brought this *Daśāvatāra* art from Karnataka gave the first show in the temple of Mahākālī at Adivare, district Sindhudurga and *tālukā* Rajapur. We do find the local tradition of performing *Daśāvatāra* dance-drama in the temples dedicated to Śiva and Kālī in Maharashtra on special occasions like Śivarātri, Tripurāri Paurṇima, Navarātri etc.

## 2.6 Hand Gestures for Daśāvatāra

Indian sculpture and Indian dancing treat the human form and the movements of the different parts of the human body with an aesthetical purpose of suggestion through a formalized language of *abhinaya*. However, it is not our purpose here to go into greater detail of the parallelism of the technique and a comparison of technical terminology of the two arts. Practically the whole field of Indian sculpture could be covered and all sculpture could be analyzed in terms of either *nṛtta* (pure dance technique) or the *abhinaya* technique of dancing. In this chapter, Daśāvatāra are analyzed in terms of dance movements and *abhinaya*. Even each sculpture can be analyzed in terms of the position of different parts of the body, the position of the head, the arms, the *hastas* and the *sthānas* because the basic treatment of the human form is similar in both the arts. It is, therefore, necessary to restrict our field of analysis.

The most striking similarity between the two arts is seen in the manipulation of the hands, termed *hastābhinaya* in dancing and *hastā* or *mudrā* in Indian sculpture. The hand positions and movements constitute an important aspect of the dance technique. The sculpturesque quality of the dance also lies in the accurate depiction of the hand movements and the arm positions along with the sitting or standing positions. Much of the symbolic and stylized quality of the Indian images lies in the proper presentation of the hand postures according to the laws laid down in the Śilpaśāstras. The hand gestures used in a specific way in each image depicts the idea or the character and the mood of the image. The Śilpaśāstras mention only a few *hastas* and most of these *hastas* are mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra or are comparable to those found in other dance texts. In this connection, it will be interesting to note that the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa (5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), *khaṇḍa* III, *adhyāya*- Thirty-four is called Nṛttasūtra. This is a comparatively long *adhyāya* of ninety seven verses which is

devoted only to the treatment of *hastābhinaya*; this also shows the importance attached to the topic. In this the *adhyāya* thirty two deals with Rahasyamudrās i.e. those hand-poses which have a secret or mystic meaning. The text verses from Rahasyamudrās of some *avatāra hastas*<sup>122</sup> give the following description.

**Matsya-** Ardhaçandra Mudrā

**Kūrma-** Turn downwards the curved Patākā hand.

**Varāha-** Make the *śikhara* hand and stretch the little finger downwards.

**Nṛsiṃha-** Join two separate *aḥkāra* hands (aḥ- Particular type of Mukula *hasta*.)

**Vāmana-** *Om Mudrā* (*Omkāra mudrā*-The *tarjani* finger is arched on the left thumb which is extended.)

**Trivikrama-** The span from the end of the little finger to the end of the thumb

**Paraśurāma-** Kapitṭha

**Dāśarathi Rāma-** Join two *śikhara* hands

**Kṛṣṇa-** Patāka

**Baladeva-** Tripatāka

**Hayaśiras-** I *mudrā* (a,I,u,ai,o *mudrās*- all the fingers beginning with the thumb are curved one by one, in the middle of the hand i.e. palm.)

The descriptions of the *hastas* clearly bring out the significance of the term Rahasyamudrā because they not only signify gods with their insignia but also the *swarā* or the syllables of the Vedas. It would be interesting to study and investigate if there is any relation between the shapes of these finger-poses and any form of ancient Indian script.

The sources for the discussion made here, includes treatises pertaining to classical dance of India. The Nāṭyaśāstra which is ascribed to

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<sup>122</sup> Priyabala Shah, Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Khaṇḍa III, Vol. II, oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961, University Publications Sales Unit, Baroda-I, PP. 79.

Bharata is considered to be the earliest available treatise on the art of theatre. This comprises several topics like music, drama, and dance. It describes the different modes of dancing, the gestures of hands- feet and the many different postures in detail. In the post Nāṭyaśāstra period the texts have followed Nāṭyaśāstra by absorbing the contemporary values except Abhinaya Darpaṇa. Abhinaya Darpaṇa is another important treatise on characteristics of gestural language written by Nandikeśvara (The date has not been critically discussed, but it may be that this work belongs to a period not later than 1200C.E.) it mentions Daśāvatāra *hastas*. Bharatārṇavā (The date of the treaties not satisfactorily identified) is another work by Nandikeśvara treats in details the *āṅgika-abhinaya* which also includes gestures, postures and movements.

The concept of *abhinaya* means ‘the art of expression’. In dance, the principle of suggestion (graceful gesticulation) is more prevalent, rather than the aspects of imitation. *Āṅgika abhinaya* relates to the movement of the *aṅgas* or limbs. The *Āṅgika* consists of the use of different gestures and postures which have been named.

Hands are the most important limbs in the making of gestures. A gesture by hand is one of the most beautiful forms of expression. The *hastas*, are the essential component of Indian classical dancing and is of equally great importance in studying the painting or sculptural representations. Hand gestures in dance can be described as emotional, devotional, and aesthetic attitudes or gestures. There are several kinds of hand gestures which are brought in for varied uses.

The Bharatārṇavā as well as Abhinaya Darpaṇa gives the description of the Daśāvatāra *Hastas*. Nandikeśvara in Abhinaya Darpaṇa describes them with the ten specific *hastās*. None of these are described in the Nāṭyaśāstra.

## 2.6.1 The Hand Gestures of the ten *avatāra* of Vishnu in *Abhinaya Darpaṇa*<sup>123</sup>

मत्स्यावतारहस्तः -

मत्स्यहस्तं दर्शयित्वा ततः स्कन्धसमौ करौ ।

धृतौ मत्स्यावतारस्य हस्त इत्यभिधीयते ॥

Showing the Matsya gesture, and keeping both the hands in such a way that the shoulders are at the same level, is called the display of the Matsyāvatāra.

कूर्मावतारहस्तः -

कूर्महस्तं दर्शयित्वा ततः स्कन्धसमौ करौ ।

धृतौ कूर्मावतारस्य हस्त इत्यभिधीयते ॥

Showing the Kūrma gesture and keeping both the hands in such a way that the shoulders are at the same level, is called the display of the Kūrmāvatāra.

वराहावतारहस्तः -

दर्शयित्वा वराहं तु कटिपार्श्वसमौ करौ ।

धृतौ वराहावतारस्य देवस्य कर इष्यते ॥

Showing the Varāha gesture and keeping both the hands on the sides of the hips is called the display of the Varāha.

नृसिंहावतारहस्तः -

वामे सिंहमुखं धृत्वा दक्षिणे त्रिपताकिका ।

नरसिंहावतारस्य हस्त इत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥

Showing the Simhamukha on the left hand and Tripatāka on right is the hand gesture of Nṛsimhāvatāra.

वामनावतारहस्तः -

ऊर्ध्वाधो धृतमुष्टिभ्यां सव्यान्याभ्यां यदि स्थितः ।

स वामनावतारस्य हस्त इत्यभिधीयते ॥

If the left hand shows upward looking *muṣṭhi* and the right hand downward looking *muṣṭhi* then it is called the hand gesture of Vāmana.

<sup>123</sup> Abhinayadarpanam, Manmohan Ghosh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (revised), published by Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 6/1A, Banchharam Akur's Lane, Calcutta, 1957, pp. 111



परशुरामावतारहस्तः -

वामं कटितटे न्यस्य दक्षिणेऽर्धपताकिका ।

धृतौ परशुरामस्य हस्त इत्यभिधीयते ॥

Keeping the left hand on the hip and showing *ardhapatāka* on the right hand is called the *Paraṣurāma*.

रामचन्द्रावतारहस्तः -

कपित्थो दक्षिणे हस्ते वामे तु शिखरः करः ।

ऊर्ध्वं धृतो रामचन्द्रहस्त इत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥

Showing *kapittha* on the right side and *śikhara* on the left held upwards is called *Rāmāvatāra hasta*, by experts.

बलरामावतारहस्तः -

पताको दक्षिणे हस्ते मुष्टिर्वामकरे तथा ।

बलरामावतारस्य हस्त इत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥

Showing *Patāka* on the right hand and *muṣṭhi* on the left is called the *Balarāmahasta*.

कृष्णावतारहस्तः -

मृगशीर्षे तु हस्ताभ्यामन्योन्याभिमुखे कृते ।

आस्योपकण्ठे कृष्णस्य हस्त इत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥

If both the hands showing *mṛgaśīrṣa* face each other and held in line with the face, then it is called the hand gesture of *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*.

कल्क्यवतारहस्तः -

पताको दक्षिणे वामे त्रिपताकः करो धृतः ।

कल्क्याख्यस्यावतारस्य हस्त इत्यभिधीयते ॥

If the right hand shows *Patāka* and the left, the *Tripatāka*, it is called the hand gesture of the *Kalki avatāra*.

## 2.6.2 Hand gestures for Viṣṇu's ten incarnations mentioned in the book 'The Mirror of Gesture' by Ananda Coomaraswami and Gopala Kristnayya Duggirala<sup>124</sup>

**Matsya:** after showing the *Matsya hasta*; *Tripatāka* with both hands at shoulder level.

**Kūrma:** after showing the *Kūrma hasta*; *Tripatāka* with both hands at shoulder level.

**Narasimha:** Left *Sinhamukha hasta*, Right *Tripatāka hasta*.

**Vāmana:** *Muṣṭi* with both hands, upwards and the other downwards.

**Paraśurāma:** the left hand on the hip and *Ardhapatāka hasta* with the right.

**Raghurāma:** Right *Kapittha hasta*, Left *Śikhara hasta*, held respectively near and far.

**Balarāma:** Left *Muṣṭi hasta* and Right *Patāka hasta*.

**Kṛṣṇa:** *Mrgasīrṣa hasta* facing one another on the shoulders.

**Kalki:** Left *Tripatāka hasta* and Right *Patāka hasta*.

The Mirror of Gesture by Ananda Coomaraswami and Gopala Kristnayya Duggirala is the English translation of the Abhinayadarpaṇa of Nandikeśvara which was originally published with a Telugu interpretation by Madabhushi Tiruvenkatachari of Nidamangalam in the year 1874. This work omits Buddha and mentions Kṛṣṇa in the enumeration of the ten *avatāras*. Varāha is also not mentioned in the list of Daśāvatāra in this book. The description given in the English translation of Abhinayadarpaṇa by Manamohan Ghosh and P. Ramachandrashekhara is different than the above mentioned book.

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<sup>124</sup>The Mirror of Gesture, Ananda Coomaraswami and Gopala Kristnayya Duggirala, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 2003, Published by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 110055, pp. 46

The Bharatārṇava is the most significant text which offers the *deśi* tradition. This is the only text to explain with the greatest possible detail the specific terms for movements along with its accompanying music and rhythm. The author takes the components of larger dance units, and analyzes them systematically by giving their definitions and their divisions. The descriptions of Daśāvatāra Hasta and the *sthānas* are also mentioned in this text.

### 2.6.3 Daśāvatāra Abhinaya Hastas given in the Bharatārṇava<sup>125</sup>

Matsyāvatara-

वैष्णव स्थानके यत्र करौ तु मकराकृती ।  
मत्स्यरूपौ हरिर्ज्ञेयो नाट्यतत्त्वविशारदैः ॥

Kurmāvatara-

अथवा शुकतुण्डोऽन्यः ततोऽधस्तात्पताककः ।  
तदेव स्थानकं यत्र सोऽयं कूर्माकृतिर्भवेत् ॥

Varāhāvatāra-

चुबुकान्ते सर्पशिरः करश्चेद् वैष्णवी स्थितिः ।  
तथा वाराहरूपस्तु हरिर्ज्ञेयो नटोत्तमैः ॥

Narasimhāvatāra-

एकपादस्थितिर्यत्र वर्धमानौ करौ यदा ।  
अथवा रेचितौ तत्र नारसिंहः स्मृतो बुधैः ॥

Vāmanāvatāra-

कमण्डलुधरो वामो दक्षिणो हृदयस्थितः ।  
अरालो वैष्णवं स्थानं वामनस्तु प्रकीर्तितः ॥

Paraśurāmāvatāra-

पताकौ यत्र संश्लिष्टौ प्राङ्मुखोर्ध्वमुखौ करौ ।  
वामन्ते तत्र परशुरामः प्रोक्तो मनीषिभिः ॥

Rāmāvatāra-

वामं तु शिखरं कृत्वा वामपार्श्वे प्रसारयेत् ।  
दक्षिणं कटकं धृत्वा दक्षांसस्य समीपतः ॥  
आलीढस्थानके स्थित्वा राममादर्शयेद् बूधः ।

<sup>125</sup> *Bharatārṇavā*, translated by Vachaspati Gairola, published by Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 1978, pp. 234

सव्ये जानुनि वामः स्यात्पताका दक्षिणो हृदि ॥  
सदंशं स्थानकं यत्र सोऽयं दाशरथिर्भवेत् ।  
पश्येत्तु नासिकां वीरासनक दृश्यते यदा ॥

Balarāmāvatāra-

कौमोदकी धनुर्वाणो दधद्वा वैष्णवी स्थितिः ।  
करौ चेन्मुष्टिशिखरौ सीराकर्षणतत्परौ ॥  
दृश्यते यत्र सम्प्रोक्तः सीरपाणिर्मनीषिभिः ।

Buddhāvatāra-

समपादौ यदा स्यातां डोलाहस्तौ च पार्श्वयोः ॥  
तत्ते बुध्द इति ज्ञेयो नाट्यतत्त्वविशारदैः ।

Kalkyāvatāra-

स्थितश्चैकेन पादेन पताकश्चोर्ध्वमण्डितः ॥  
विज्ञेयः कल्किरूपः स्यादवतारो हरिर्बुधैः ।

This work omits Kṛṣṇa and mentions Buddha in the list of the ten *avatāras*. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned separately.

Śrikrṣṇa -

त्रिभङ्गिस्थानके स्थित्वा वेणुनादाकृती करौ ॥  
दृश्यन्ते यत्र विज्ञेयास्तत्र गोपालमूर्तयः ।

#### 2.6.4 The description of the Daśāvatāra Hasta and the *sthānas* given in the Bharatārṇava-

No.	Avatara	Single Hands		Combined Hands	Position
1	Matsyā	-	-	Makara	Vaiṣṇava Sthānaka
2	Kūrma	One hand Śukatūṇḍa	Other patāka below Śukatūṇḍa hand	-	Vaiṣṇava Sthānaka
3	Varāha	Sarpaśirṣa near chin (both hands)		-	Vaiṣṇava Sthānaka
4	Narasimha	-	-	Vardhamāna Mudrā or	Standing on one

				Recita Mudrā	leg
5	Vāmana	Right hand Arāla, near chest	Holding Kaṁdalu in Left hand	-	Vaiṣṇava Sthānaka
6	Paraśurāma	Patāka (both hands) hands in parānmukha and ūrdhvamukha position on left side		-	-
7	Rāma-1	Left hand Śikhara spreading on left side	Right Kaṭakāmukha near shoulder	-	Ālīdha Sthānaka
8	Rāma-2	Left hand resting on left knee	Right Patāka near heart, changing Patāka into Saṁdamṣa	-	Vīrāsana position
9	Balarāma	-	-	Showing Viṣṇu's weapon and Kaumodakī, Mass, bow and arrow with both hands. Also showing Muṣṭi and Śikhara to denote Hala	Vaiṣṇava Sthānaka
10	Buddha	Both hands Dolā		-	Natural standing position
11	Kalki	One hand Patāka upward	-	-	Standing on one leg

### 2.6.5 Observations

The Abhinaya Darpaṇam which was written by Nandikeśvara mentions Daśāvatāra with the specific *hastas*. By these gestures a dancer can indicate various incarnations of Viṣṇu. As some scholars have suggested, 12<sup>th</sup> century as the possible date of the Abhinaya Darpaṇam this also means that Nandikeśvara wrote his treatise in the same century in which Jayadeva composed his dramatic poetry Gīta-Govinda. However, it may be noted that Jayadeva has accepted Buddha as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu but Nandikeśvara does not mention Buddhāvatāra *hasta* in his list of Daśāvatāra *hastas* in the Abhinaya Darpaṇam. The Bharatārṇava another work by Nandikeśvara which includes hand gestures and postures related to each *avatāra* includes Buddha in the list of Viṣṇu's *avatāra*. This indicates that may be at the time of Jayadeva there must have been a practice of using specific hand gestures for a particular character and to show his mood with a prescribed hand gesture in a formalized way in Indian dance or drama performance.

It will be obvious from the above discussion that there are many vital points of contact between the art of iconography and the art of dancing. The Daśāvatāra *hastas* described in the Abhinaya Darpaṇam can be applied fairly accurately to the *hastas* of the different sculptured images of Daśāvatāra seen in Indian iconography. The use of specific hand gestures in Indian classical dance is very much predominant but in Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka of Maharashtra, the actors never limit themselves to the use of *hastas*. But it is interesting to observe that they do make use of *sthānas* mentioned in the *śāstras*.

## 2.7 Philatelic collection of Daśāvatāra

(Stamp-collection)

### 2.7.1 Introduction

Indian Philately reflects Indian history, culture, traditions and achievements in all its facets. Through the stamp collection the nation pays its glorious tribute to the great Saints and Philosophers, Poets and Writers, Artists and many others. The Indian Postal Service issued a series of ten stamps with the Daśāvatāra as the theme in the year 2009.

The list of incarnations sometimes includes Balarām instead of Kṛṣṇa as eighth incarnation and Buddha as ninth incarnation due to various reasons.

Though Kṛṣṇāvatār is the most popular incarnation of Viṣṇu, being an absolute incarnation, it is not referred to as an incarnation but as Lord Viṣṇu himself in Jayadeva's Gīta Govinda.

Here is a compilation of the stamps issued representing different Avatāra of Viṣṇu.

- **Buddhāvatāra**

The connection between Hinduism and Buddhism can be observed from the seventh-eight century C.E. Buddha (PL.11, Fig. 1.b) figures are shown in the list of Daśāvatāra, even 12<sup>th</sup> century poet Jayadeva mentions Buddha *avatāra* in his poem and says that 'Lord came to purify Hinduism of its excessive ritualism'. It is interesting to note that Nepal postal service issued a stamp showing Buddha's birth at Lumbini. ( PL.11, Fig. 1.a)

1. "Siddhartha with injured bird" issued in 1991 on Birth Centenary (PL.11, Fig. 2.a)<sup>126</sup>
2. Ajanta Cave Painting of Padmapāṇi, issued in 1971 on the 25th Anniversary of UNESCO (PL.11, Fig. 2.b)

▪ **Matsyāvatāra**

Matsya *avatāra* represents the form of a giant fish, Lord Viṣṇu assumed this form to retrieve the four Vedas which were stolen from Brahma by the demon Hayagrīva. (PL.11, Fig. 3.a and 3.b)

The mythical story behind Matsya *avatār* is very much similar to the story of Biblical Noah. Matsya *avatār* was taken by lord Viṣṇu during the *pralaya* that submerged the earth. Viṣṇu commanded Manu to gather samples of different species and wait in a boat. The gigantic golden fish then dragged the boat through the deluge. This act Lord Viṣṇu of enabled Brahma to start the new creation.

▪ **Kūrmāvatāra**

The second incarnation refers to the form of a tortoise, which is Kūrmāvatāra. This was an amphibious creature. (PL.11, Fig. 4.a and 4.b)

Lord Viṣṇu took the form of an immense tortoise for bearing the weight of the mount Maṇḍāra on his back, the mount was used as a churning whisk by gods and demons during the Churning of the Ocean with the goal to get Amṛta, or the divine elixir which gives immortality. (PL.12, Fig. 4.c)

▪ **Varāhāvatāra**

This is the third incarnation of lord Viṣṇu and indicates the evolution process of life form which has moved out of water and has adapted to

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<sup>126</sup> India Postage Stamps since 1947, Published by Indian Post and Telegraphs Department, Govt. of India, New Delhi. (1982)



land. Varāha means boar and is a complete animal. In the Varāha *avatāra* lord Viṣṇu lifted the earth out of the flood water which had been submerged. (PL.12, Fig. 5.a and 5.b)

▪ **Narasimhāvatara**

In this fourth incarnation, Lord Viṣṇu appeared on earth as half man-half lion for the purpose of saving His devotee Prahlāda, son of the wicked demon Hiraṇyakaśyapu, who considered Lord Viṣṇu as his enemy.

In South India, during Bhāgwata Mela Nāṭaka, when the story of Prahlāda is staged, the player who depicts Narasimha wears a ritual mask richly coloured and bejewelled. This mask is kept inside the temple and prayers are offered to it daily. (PL.12, Fig. 6.a, 6.b and 6.c)

▪ **Vāmanāvatara**

Vāmana *avatāra* is the most popular incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, adored and celebrated in Kerala on the eve of Onam. The idols of Vāmana found are short, representing a child adorning the sacred thread in his left hand he holds an umbrella and in right a *kamaṇḍalu*. (PL.12, Fig. 7.a and 7.b) Viṣṇu in the guise of a young Brahmin boy approached Bali and asked for a strip of land, measured by three paces by his tiny feet. King Bali recognised it was only Mahāviṣṇu that came to him for the gift. He felt elated that the Mighty Lord of the whole universe approached him for charity. He readily granted His wish. Vāmana covered the earth and heaven with his two steps. Then King Bali in all humility offered his head for the third pace.

▪ **Paraśurāma**

Paraśurāma the sixth incarnation of Lord, the valiant son of Jamadagni and Reṇukā, endowed with all the sterling qualities of the head and the heart, characteristic of a warrior king. (PL.12, Fig. 8.a and PL.13, 8.b)

This incarnation is the only one of the traditional ten *avatāra* that is not a direct descent of lord Viṣṇu. One can come across the stories about Paraśurāma in the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and in some Purāṇas.

- **Rāma**

Rāma *avatāra* is one of the two most popular incarnations of lord Viṣṇu. Rāma is adored as a paragon of virtues and icon of ideals. He was the very embodiment of dignity, modesty and virtue. Rāma destroyed the demon king Rāvaṇa who committed the incorrigible crime of abducting Sītā. He is portrayed with the bow and arrows. (PL.13, Fig. 9.a, 9.b and 9.c)

- **Balarāma**

He is the elder brother of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The role of Balarāma is not very significant as compared with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. He is taken as one of the *avatāras* Viṣṇu. Though it is not a *pūrṇāvatāra*, it is included in the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in the South India. But in the North India in certain regions, Balarāma is substituted by Buddha. (PL.13, Fig. 10)

- **Kṛṣṇa**

He is the most popular incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu and is indicative of man's advancement in the different fields. It is called as *pūrṇāvatāra*; this *avatāra* fascinates our attention right from his birth till his end. He distinguishes himself by his pranks in his childhood; in youth, as a lover, in valour as a warrior, an able charioteer, a friend, philosopher and guide. The significance of this *avatāra* is brought out through the vital part, he played in the Mahābhārata. (PL.13, Fig. 11.a, 11.b and 11.c)

- **Kalki**

Kalki as a destroyer and this incarnation is expected at the end of the *kaliyuga* when people will lose faith in their religion and will be cruel. For Kalki *avatāra*, Jayadeva writes in the ‘Gīta Govinda’, “Oh Lord, in the form of Kalki, you come to destroy the wicked, you carry the sword in your hand...” (PL.14, Fig. 12)

Courtesy: The collection includes some stamps from <http://rainbowstampnews.blogspot.com/2010/01/shimla-january-2010-issu-25>

- ❖ **Philatelic collection of Daśāvatāra**

The Indian Postal Service issued a set of commemorative stamps in the year 2009 based on Orissa School of paintings personifying first chapter of Jayadeva’s ‘Gīta Govinda’ glorifying the “Ten Incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu”. (PL.14, Fig. 13a and b)

### **2.7.2 Observations**

In this way not only literary intelligence of Indian poet, Jayadeva is highlighted but also an effort is made to spread a part of Indian Art and culture to every part of the world through these tiny representatives. Daśāvatāra theme is also used in modern age as an educational aid.

## 2.8 Films and Multimedia

### 2.8.1 The 'Daśāvatār' Application for iPad

Art and Craft are interdependent forms. In recent times technical devices such as photography, film, Computer animation etc. are being employed for their preservation. The 'Daśāvatāra' mobile application for iPad is Among the First of its Kind for Promoting Art.

- Daśāvatāra is a series of paintings by the eminent artist Bharat Tripathi that depict each of Viṣṇu's ten incarnations, per Hindu mythology that showcases art on iPads. It is the latest of his works<sup>127</sup>. This application is about Daśāvatāra (Viṣṇu's ten incarnations). Bharat Tripathi<sup>128</sup> is a Mumbai based artist, and is a former income tax commissioner. He has contributed by presenting 'Daśāvatāra' in a figurative abstract form. This is a very innovative and beautiful art work. (PL.15, Fig. 14)
- Daśāvatāra App.<sup>129</sup>. This Application contains the *ślokas* of Daśāvatāra. It is published by Arabinda Lenka. There is another application which is published by Sunil Kapadia. This is an informative application, which describes the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.
- Radio Web Carnatic<sup>130</sup>- This program features some songs connected to Daśāvatāra. The program is conducted by RJ: Srividya.

### 2.8.2 Film and Animation

Arts and entertainment in India has a rich and ancient history. Arts refer to paintings, architecture, literature, music, dance, languages and cinema also. India is a major regional centre for cinema.

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<sup>127</sup> As reported in <http://www.extentia.com/>

<sup>128</sup> As reported in <http://www.ixtentia.com/apps-portfolio/>

<sup>129</sup> As reported in [apps.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/app/dashavtar](http://apps.microsoft.com/windows/en-us/app/dashavtar)

<sup>130</sup> As reported in [radioweb.in/programs/aspects-vishnu-dashavatara](http://radioweb.in/programs/aspects-vishnu-dashavatara)

- A mythological **Kannada film** Daśāvatāra-Full Length in HD was released in India, depicting the ten principle avatārs of Lord Viṣṇu<sup>131</sup>. (**Video- 5**)

- **Short film**

Special mention must be needed for the award winning Short film Avatār (**Video- 6**), released on Apr 20, 2012. The film is produced by Shri. Ram Mohan. The concept, Direction and animation are done by Upasana Nattoji Roy. This film is a combination of different Indian art forms. There is a blending of Classical Tanjavur paintings with the art of storytelling<sup>132</sup>.

- **Video game**

Some short stories about the various incarnations are narrated with the support of sound and voice, which is followed by an interactive story cum game for children aged 5-7 yrs of age. This not only provides small tasks at each level after the story but also educate them indirectly about the Hindu Gods. The project is done by Smt.Vasudha from New Delhi, India<sup>133</sup>. (PL.15, Fig. 15 a, b, c, d)

- Another interesting interactive installation titled Daśāvatāra (the evolution of life) exhibited at the Traffic Island, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival on 4th to 12th February 2012, in Mumbai. This creative installation was created by Dr. Ajanta Sen, Founder, and Design in India.

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<sup>131</sup> As reported in [www.ninepix.com/anushka-shetty/kannada-movie---dashavatara](http://www.ninepix.com/anushka-shetty/kannada-movie---dashavatara)

<sup>132</sup> As reported in [wn.com/Dashavathara](http://wn.com/Dashavathara)

<sup>133</sup> As reported in [www.behance.net/gallery/DASHAVATARA-Interactive-Game](http://www.behance.net/gallery/DASHAVATARA-Interactive-Game)

## CHAPTER - 3

### SIMILARITIES IN THE CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION AND DAŚĀVATĀRA

Geologic time means the entire life span on the earth. Plants and animals change gradually and present a chronological sequence of events, this leads to the evolution of different complex forms<sup>1</sup>. Initially the earth was molten. The oldest rocks began to solidify about four billion years ago, but the inner core remained fluid, driving volcanic activity. The oceans provided the cradle from which life emerged. Nobody knows exactly how this happened, but early in the earth's history molecules with the ability to copy them appeared in the chemicals present in the ocean water<sup>2</sup>. These evolutionary changes which are found in the rock beds are studied in the form of fossils. This chapter focuses on the gradual development of Daśāvatāra in relation to the evolutionary developments.

#### 3.1.1 Similarities in the concept of Daśāvatāra and modern Geology

The concept of biological evolution is clearly shown in the form of Daśāvatāra of Lord Viṣṇu in Hindu mythology. If we try and study the subject making a comparison of it with the geologic time scale we do find quite a few interesting similarities. According to Daśāvatāra concept the first *avatāra* of Viṣṇu in the form of a fish appeared on this earth. We can compare this with biological events on different geological time scale.

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<sup>1</sup> As reported in <http://nitishpriyadarshi.blog.com/2009/05/similarities-in-concept-of-evolution->

<sup>2</sup> The origins of everyday things edited and designed by: The Reader's Digest Association Ltd., London, 2002, Reprint, PP.11.

Simple organisms that we would recognise as being alive existed in seawater. These were single-celled creatures, and they began to transform the earth. Matsya the fish incarnation symbolises the forming of the protoplasm. Fish with backbones were living by 450 million years ago, at about the same time as the first plants started growing on land<sup>3</sup>.

Next, these water animals began to crawl on the land and started living in both habitats. Insects and amphibians appeared 60 million years later. In Daśāvatāra the second *avatāra* was in the form of turtle (reptiles). In geology also the first reptiles come as second important evolution.

The third Varāha *avatāra* was in the form of a wild Boar indicates the birth of the mammals.

Narasimha, the Man-Lion was the fourth *avatāra*. But in geology no such evidences are mentioned. It may indicate the development of human limbs and evolution of ape-man form.

The fifth Vāmana *avatāra* reflects the early stage of development of man. Ardipithecus ramidus was an ape that had some human features; small eye, teeth and a narrow base to the skull. It also walked upright, had a small brain and lived in the forests, feeding mainly on fruit<sup>4</sup>. The course of evolution that led from Ardipithecus to Homo sapiens is complex and far from clear. But some 3 to 5 million years ago an ape emerged which stood upright at about four feet high, with short legs and long arms. Named after the region of Ethiopia where its fossil remains have been found<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The origins of everyday things edited and designed by: The Reader's Digest Association Ltd., London, 2002, Reprint, PP.11

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. PP. 12

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. PP. 12-13

Paraśurāma, the sixth *avatāra* is shown with an axe. It has the similarities with the Stone Age man and the axe symbolises the use of metal by humans.

Lord Rāma shows the ability to have an administration power; Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Buddha were the other *avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu. This process indicates the physical and mental changes in human from.

The first was the Rāma *avatāra*. This *avatāra* shows the ability of mankind to have an administration power. Lord Viṣṇu incarnated himself in this form to save the world from the oppressions of the demon king Rāvaṇa. Kṛṣṇa *avatāra* reflects the scientific development of man.

The Buddha *avatāra* reflects the intellectual development of man.

The next *avatāra* in the list of the Daśāvatāra is Kalki. Some scholars opine that Kalki is a human incarnation and yet to come. He will judge the wicked, reward the good, and restore the coming age. This is a late addition to Vaiṣṇava myth, and does not play a very important part in literature or iconography.

The evolution of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu from the Matsya to higher forms of life and their reflection on the history of mankind is an interesting topic. However, it is not our purpose here to go into greater detail of the subject. There are difference of opinions among the scholars regarding comparing the time of evolution of different species in Daśāvatāra and modern geological time scale. The major difference present in the sequence of the evolution of different species is that, in Daśāvatāra there is no concept of Dinosaurs or birds.



### 3.1.2 Darwinian's theory of evolution and Daśāvatāra

Charles Darwin (1809-1882 C.E.) the English naturalist announced his theory which is one of the main ideas in the theory of evolution in the year 1859 C.E. He says that fossils showed how plants and animals evolved gradually over millions of years from primitive forms of life. The ten *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu are also connected to the evolutionary development of animal kingdom. An *avatāra* means the incarnation or bodily manifestation of an immortal being. It derives from the Sanskrit word '*avatāra*' which means "descent" and usually implies a deliberate for special purposes. Etymology of the term *avatāra* shows 'ava' meaning 'away, down or off' prefixed to the verbal root 'Tr' meaning 'to cross over'. About this *avatāra*, *Pāṇinī* explained it as the procedure from the highest position to come down.<sup>6</sup> *Avatāra* means coming down of any Lord or Goddess. They incarnate themselves in the form of human or any other form to protect their devotees and the world from wicked people. This concept is well explained in the famous verse of Bhāgavata Purāṇa, "Yadā Yadā hi dharmasya....." (B.P. 4.7-8).

These incarnations are said to have been in the human form, animal form or even in the combined human-animal form. Here, the ten incarnations are explained with the reference of evolutionary development<sup>7</sup>.

Vinod M. K. mentioned the scientific view of Daśāvatāra in his article 'Darwinian Daśāvatāra<sup>8</sup>'. He states that the Daśāvatāra seem to have given us the theory of Evolution, even though in a different way, very

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<sup>6</sup> 'ave *tr̥stror̥gha*' (3.3.120) *Pāṇinī*, *Pāṇinīya Śikṣā*: Narayana Mishra, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, Delhi, (1978), First edition

<sup>7</sup> Agrawal V. S.: *Matsya Purāṇa: A study*, glory of Nārāyaṇa, All India Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi, (1963) first edition, pp. 263

<sup>8</sup> As reported in <http://creative.sulekha.com/darwinian-dashavatara>

much before Darwin's<sup>9</sup> time. Mr. Vinod has shown the gradual development of Daśāvatāra in relation to the evolutionary developments of animal kingdom and also mentions that "Darwin's work is a far more scientific version, better suited for scholastic purposes, the Daśāvatāra too, if understood properly, is a meaningful study of evolution"<sup>10</sup>.

The divinities and heroes composing the list were adopted by Vaiṣṇavism at different times, but all were incorporated by the eleventh century C.E. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, though two separate incarnations, existed at the same time. That explains the coexistence of the different *avatāra*. Similarly, Paraśurāma makes an appearance in the Rāmāyaṇa as well as the Mahābhārata. The Daśāvatāra justifies this by saying that Paraśurāma was immortal. The scriptures speak of God and His power of assuming different forms and science explains us that the beings can transform themselves physically to adapt to their surroundings.

### 3.2 The Śāligrāma

The Śāligrāma is the most sacred stone worshipped by the Vaiṣṇavas, it is used to worship Viṣṇu. The Śāligrāma is considered a direct symbol of Lord Viṣṇu in the form of stone. The stones which appear in a place called Dāmoder *kunḍa* in Nepal near Gaṇḍaki River are called Śālagrama *śilas*. (PL.XVI, Fig. 1.a,b and c) This stone is the dwelling place for a small insect which cuts through the Śāligrām stone with its tooth and stays inside it<sup>11</sup>. The Śāligrāma stones are formed million of years back when the Himalaya was an ocean floor. The marks on the Śāligrāma the discus of Lord Viṣṇu give it a special significance. The

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<sup>9</sup> The English Naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) developed his ideas about evolution in to a proper scientific theory, The Children's Ency., Earth and Space, Pub. Parragon (2012), PP.32

<sup>10</sup> As reported in <http://creative.sulekha.com/darwinian-dashavatara>

<sup>11</sup> From personal communication with Dr. Ajit Vartak

Śāligrāma is in black colour. The stones are of different shapes and sizes. They are often associated with different incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

Scientifically the Śāligrāma is described as fossil-stones and characterized by the presence of discus marks. The black stones of Śāligrāma in which fossil ammonites are embedded are the most well known stones in the world. Dr. Ajit Vartak, a geologist from Pune, has travelled across the Indian subcontinents to locate the fossils<sup>12</sup>. He has studied hundreds of these specimens. Though Ammonites is his focus of study, his collection includes other fossil types as well from all around the globe. His collection throws light on different fossil groups of different periods.<sup>13</sup> While interviewing him, pointing out at a whorled Ammonite cast in black limestone from his collection Dr. Vartak said that the particular one dates back to the Jurassic period and is about 160 million years old. In India these black ammonites are known as Śāligrāma and have been worshipped as a representation of Lord Viṣṇu since ancient times<sup>14</sup>.

The legend, tells us that Lord Viṣṇu for the benefit of mankind in *kaliyuga* comes on the earth in the form of Śāligrāma and in the *tulsi* plants. The worship of Viṣṇu in the form of Śāligrāma is iconic in character. They are worshipped in the Indian temples and monasteries. These scared stones are worshiped as visible and natural emblems of Lord Viṣṇu. They are also worshipped in religious functions like Vāstu-śāntī pūjā etc.

Significance of Śāligrāma is described in *Agni purāṇa*, *Devi Bhāgavata* and *Skanda purāṇa*. Most *purāṇas* advocate that the

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<sup>12</sup> The remains of an animal or plant present from an earlier era inside a rock or other geologic deposit, often as an impression or in petrified state.

<sup>13</sup> As reported in [www.indianexpress.com/news/tales-from-a-frozen-past/](http://www.indianexpress.com/news/tales-from-a-frozen-past/)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

worship of Śāligrāma brings prosperity, good health and wealth, success and long life.

*"apūtro labhate pūtram śāligrāma-pūjanāt"<sup>15</sup>*

### 3.3 Rudrākṣa

Rudrākṣa<sup>16</sup> is the seed of the Rudrākṣa tree. The dry seeds of the Rudrākṣa are being used as a rosary, also worn as an ornament. The seed of Rudrākṣa is rough in texture, with the outer shell divided into different segments by prominent ridges running from top to bottom. These form the faces of the Rudrākṣa. The number of faces range from one to twenty-one. A major percentage of beads available have five or six faces. It is interesting to note that the Rudrākṣa with ten faces<sup>17</sup> is a symbol of Viṣṇu and Rudrākṣa with sixteen faces is a symbol of Kalki.

### Observations

Thus, the working premises of the Daśāvatāra and the Theory of Evolution do have certain similarities in concept. The worship of Viṣṇu in the shape of a Śāligrāma, is an iconic in character. Worship of the Śāligrāma and the Rudrākṣa is widespread and dates back to a distant past. We can clearly make out that the tendency of connecting natural objects to the form of Lord Viṣṇu is quite ancient who is considered as a preserver of the Universe and protector of the earth or Bhūmidevi. Therefore, the concept of Daśāvatāra gives indirect message- "Save Earth"/ "Save Nature".

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<sup>15</sup> Rao Ramachandra S. K., (1996) Śāligrāmā-Kośa Vol.2, First edition, Kalpataru Research Achademy, No.37, Shankara Park, Shankarapuram, Bangalore 560004.

<sup>16</sup> Kamal Narayan Seetha: (2008), The Power of Rudraksha (Hindi), Jaico Publishing House, Fort, Mumbai- 400001.

<sup>17</sup> Shastri Tileshwarnath: Rudraksha Mahatmya aur Dharana Vidhi, Bholanath Book depot, Colcatta-7, PP.21

## CHAPTER- 4

### ELUCIDATION OF DAŚĀVATĀRA IN MUSIC AND DANCE LITERATURE

#### 4.1 Introduction

Indian poetry and Indian literature in general, have a long history dating back to Vedic times. Poetry reflects diverse spiritual traditions within India. Classical poetry refers to the poetry produced during approximately the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. In Indian traditional drama, words and their meanings have to be conveyed to the audience with appropriate musical forms chosen to increase the intensity of the meaning. Thus, songs in these plays are both meaningful and poetically expressive; the quality of poetry has meant also, adherence to metres. In India, the basis of metrical forms is not accent but the duration of a syllable. Metrical forms that grew popular during the medieval period were primarily those that lent themselves well to recitation, long-drawn out singing and dance-accompaniment. Ballad-singers, minstrels and court-singers were in plenty during the medieval period when India was divided into different parts. Bards and minstrels popularized metres which passed into the regional plays.

The synthesis between poetry and music has also been promoted by the temple during the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. in northern India. Some of the greatest poets of that period in the regional languages were saints and devotees of the Vaiṣṇava temples. Their poems were meant to be sung at the temples and as they were themselves well-versed in music, their compositions set a pattern for musical poetry that has been readily adopted by drama. That is also perhaps the reason for devotional music occupying in traditional regional plays a place equal in importance to heroic and romantic music. The *kīrtana* of the Bengali Jātrā play is an example of devotional music. Gīta-

Govinda of Jayadeva also had a great impact on the religious, social and artistic traditions of Orissa. The Aṣṭapadis of the Gīta Govinda form a staple theme in present-day Bharatanāṭyam and Odissi classical dance recitals.

After the 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E., the use of Sanskrit for general literature declined, most importantly because of the emergence of literature in vernacular Indian languages (notably Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada). Telugu and Tamil poetry originated in the southern provinces of India was used by Bhakti reformers to reach the common man and spread their ideas. Tamil literature has a rich and long literary tradition spanning more than two thousand years. From the 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. the Tamil devotional poems written by *Nayanārs* (sages of Śaivism) and *Alvārs*, (sages of Vaiṣṇavism) heralded the great Bhakti movement. The earliest known extant literary work in Malayalam is Rāmacaritam, an epic poem written in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Rāmacaritam mainly consists of stories from the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* of the Rāmāyaṇa. Kannada poetry called *Vacanas*, were comments on that period's social, religious and economic conditions. The Haridāsas around 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E. spread the message of *bhakti* through their Dāsa Sāhitya, popularly known as Devaranāmas. These poems called Padas were usually of 10 to 20 lines and expressed the desire of the *Bhakta* or devotee to be one with God.

This chapter aims to highlight the aspects pertaining to the literary value of the compositions based on Daśāvatāra theme. There are numerous compositions which are based on the theme of Daśāvatāra. That is why the description of only a few illustrative compositions on Daśāvatāra has been given in this chapter.

Purāṇas describe numerous and extremely varied forms of the *avatāra* that Lord Viṣṇu took at various stages, for various reasons. Gradually, the principal *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu came to be restricted to ten. This

list of ten *avatāra* appears in an inscription probably for the first time on the lintel above the figure of Śankaranārāyana in the Varāha Perumāl temple at Mahabalipuram in the latter half of the seventh century.

*Matsya kūrmo varāhaśca narasiṃhotha vāmanah |*  
*Rāmo rāmaśca kṛṣṇasca buddhakalki ca te daśah ||*

(In the above inscription, the first six letters were mutilated, and could not be read properly.)

The Veṅkaṭeśasuprabhātam composed in Sanskrit (1430 c.C.E.) by Śrī Anantācārya, the Rāmānujācārya of Kanchipuram which starts with the hymn dedicated to Śrī Rāma and the twenty forth *śloka* verses places his ten incarnations.

मीनाकृते कमठकोलनृसिंहवर्णिन्  
स्वामिन् परश्वधतपोधन रामचन्द्र।  
शेषांशराम यदुनन्दन कल्किरूप  
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥

*“mīnākṛte kamaṭhakolanṛsiṃhavarṇin*  
*svāmin paraśvadhatapodhana rāmacandra |*  
*śeṣāṃśarāma yadunandana kalkirūpa*  
*śrīveṅkaṭācalapate tava suprabhātam |...”*

Lord in ten incarnations of Matsya (Fish), Kamatha (Tortoise), Kola (Boar), Narasiṃha (Man-lion), Trivikrama (Dwarf), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Kalki! Lord of Venkatachala! May it be an auspicious dawn to Thee.

Kṣemendra also comes from that time, which produced a striking constellation of encyclopaedic writers. Kṣemendra’s birth is placed somewhere after 990 c.C.E. His literary activities fall in the middle of 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. His work Daśāvatāra Carita describes and extols the

ten incarnations of Viṣṇu in ten separate sections in 1764 verses. In Daśāvatāra Carita probably finished in 1066 c.C.E. Kṣemendra salutes various incarnations of Viṣṇu. He has selected Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. In this work the ninth *avatāra*, Buddha has been represented as the personification of Kṛṣṇa.

### Kṣemendra on Kalki:

*svachhanda-prochhalan-mlenchha-timirodbheda-sach-Chaviḥ |  
kalki-Viṣṇuḥ prakāśāya prabhātārka ivāstu vaḥ ||*<sup>1</sup>

Viṣṇu's incarnation Kalki would take *avatāra* to end Kali age. He would save the country from the devastation and finish *mleñchas* and thus would establish peace on earth.

Kṣemendra's selection of Avatāra is attributed to Purāṇas. He seems to have written this work to highlight different powers of these *avatāra* and moralise the corrupt society of Kashmir, by propagating their worship.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the *avatāra stotras* can be found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. There is a Vāmana *stotra* from Padma Purāṇa. Among the several Narasimha *stotra*; the one by Ādi Śaṅkaracārya is famous. In this collection a rare and great prayer extolling Narasimha, composed by Śaniśchara (moving planet) is included. In this composition Lord Narasimha tells Śani that the evil effects that are brought about by Śani would be cured by reading this prayer on Saturdays. A prayer of the nails of Narasimha (App. A. 15) also stands out; it was written as an introduction for the Hari Vayu Stuti which was written by saint Madhvacharya's disciple Shri Trivikrāmacārya. Also a rare prayer praising the Matsya *avatāra* (App. A. 13) is included therein. Kūrma is

<sup>1</sup>Pathak Arun: Daśāvatārcaritam, Mahakavi Kṣemendra Praṇit-Sāhittik evam Sānskrutik Anuśilan, Sharada Publishing House, Delhi .PP. 268.

<sup>2</sup>Khosla Sarla, Kshemendra and His Times (Socio-Religious and Economic History of Kashmir as Depicted by Kshemendra) 2001, Published by Radhe shyam Shukla for Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi-110007.PP.53.



the second incarnation of Viṣṇu. Prayer to the incarnation of Kūrma (App. A. 10) is taken from a Malayalam *stotra* book, of which the name or the publishers are not known. Viṣṇu in the form of a boar killed Hiranyākṣa a demon. The sages assembled there praised him by this prayer which occurs in the third *skandha* and in the thirteenth chapter in Ślokas 33-44 of Bhāgavata. In the composition praising Varāha *avatāra*, Varāha is described as the form of Yajñya and his body parts are identified with the various articles used in the Yajñya (The translation of Bhāgavata by Shri. C.I. Goswami has been taken in the collection, which was published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur). Viṣṇu took the form of a young Brahmin boy, (dwarf), called Vāmana. The people of Kerala believe that he visits them on their festival of Thirunam and people of Karnataka believe that he visits them every year on Bali Padyami. This is a very rare *stotra*, addressed to Vāmana.

Paraśurāma was an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Paraśurāma, after killing the *kṣatriyas*, gave all the land he won in charity. Then he threw his axe and raised the present day Kerala, this land is called Paraśurāmakṣetra. It seems that it has been the practice in Kerala in ancient days to sing this prayer to Paraśurāma, before starting any religious rites.

Many great composers of the North and South Indian system of music also turned their attention to the ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, and we find numerous Kṛtis, and Kīrtana's glorifying the ten *avatāra*. These compositions involve at least ten stanzas, one for each incarnation. The foremost among these, is in the *gītām* format, in poet Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda *mahākāvya*, which starts with "pralayapayodhijale". There are ten stanzas, one describing each *avatāra*, each ending with the phrases "Jaya Jagadīśa Hare", and a concluding stanza, recording the author's signature. Also in Andāl's poems we find the description of some *avatāra*. During the period when the musical trinity (Tyagaraja, Muttusvāmi Dikṣitar, and

Shyama Shastri), nourished the Carnatic music with their compositions, we find numerous *stotras* on some or all ten of the *avatāra*. A single work containing all ten *avatāra* is a *Daśāvatāra Stuti* composed by Vādirāja, consisting of thirty-four stanzas in a rare and lengthy metre in Sanskrit language (App. A. 24, 25)

The collection of *Daśāvatāra* compositions also includes *Daśāvatāra Śābdam* (App. A. 19) which renders the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, in Telugu language and is performed at a fast tempo. It is a composition of Siddhabatula Raṅgadāsu of Peddapulivaru in Andhra Pradesh. The ten couplets, though similar in structure, are quite different. A ragamalika, “*parkadal alai mele*”, in Tamil, sung by M.L. Vasantakumari, is a very popular song on the ten incarnations. It is actually a film song composed for the Tamil movie,” *Rājā Desingh*” (App. A. 18).

Besides these compositions, the theme of the ten incarnations is repeated in many other compositions. The *caraṇam* of the *kṛti*, “*Śri Satyanarayaṇam Upasāṁhe*” by Muttusvami Dikshitar, in *raga* *Shubhapantuvarali* has the lines “*Matsya Kūrma Varāhādi Daśāvatāra Prabhavam*”. There are several prayers addressed to Viṣṇu in his ten incarnations in different languages. Some Malyalam *Daśāvatāra Stutis* (App. A. 5, 6, 7 ) are also included in the collection from which a rare one is written in the *Bhujaṅga* metre (App. A. 8 ). Also a unique prayer on *Daśāvatāra* which describes, a *bhakta*’s complain to the god that he does not show the same haste in solving the devotee’s problems as he did when he took several incarnations in the world is available.

All these *avatāra* manifest Viṣṇu, or a portion of Himself, in a human, an animal, or a human-animal form. As can be seen from all the collected compositions, all but one *avatāra* has been generally agreed upon by all available sources. The ninth one, according to some

sources is Balarāma, the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa, and while some other sources accept it as Buddha.

## 4.2 Daśāvatāra and Indian Saint Literature

**Anḍāl** is an 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (or earlier) Tamil saint and one of the twelve Alvārs (saints) and the only woman Alvār of Vaiṣṇavism. Anḍāl is known for her devotion towards Lord Viṣṇu.<sup>3</sup>

Anḍāl composed two works in her short life of fifteen years. Her first work is a collection of thirty verses known as Thiruppavai and the second is the Nachiar Tirumozhi, a poem of one hundred and forty-three verses. Both of these works have been studied extensively by many scholars. Anḍāl's only God is Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu Himself is frequently mentioned in her poem, (App. A.2) and among his incarnations reference is made most frequently to Vāmana-Trivikrāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Narasimha and almost certainly to Kūrma.

Kūrma

*Cinturac cempoṭṭip pūl tirumāliruñcūlai eṅkum  
Intira kūpaṅkaḷī eḷuntum parantiṭṭānavāl;  
Mantaram nāṭṭi anru maturak koluñcāru koṅṭa  
Cuntarattoḷutaiyāṅ cuḷalaiyiṅiṅru uytuṅ kolū?*

Varāha

*Pāci tūrttuk kiṭanta pār-makaṭkup paṅṭu oru naḷ |  
Mācu uṭampil nīr vārā mānam ilāp paṅṛi ām |  
Ṭīcu uṭaiya tīvaṛ tiruvaraṅkac celvanār |  
Pīciyiruppanakaḷ pīrkkavum pīravī |*

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<sup>3</sup>Sundaram P.S.:The Poems Of Anḍāla, 1987, Anathacharya Indological Research Institute 625, Cuff Parade, Bombay-5.

Narasimha

nāru narum polilmāliruñcūlai nampikku nān |  
nūru taṭavil veṇṇey vāynErntu parāvi vaittīn |  
nūru taṭā nirainta akkāra aṭicil connEn |  
eru tiuvuṭaiyān inru vantu ivai kolḷuñ kolū? |

.....

**Ādi Śaṅkarācārya** (788c.C.E.-820c.C.E.) also known as Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya and Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, was an Indian philosopher from Kālady of present day Kerala who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedānta.<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, his works are classified under Bhāṣya (commentary), *Prakarāṇa graṅtha* and *Stotra*. The devotional hymns are rich in poetry, (App. A.1) serving to highlight the relationship between the devotee and the deity. In the following lines of “*Shri Viṣṇupadādikeśānta Stotra*” in Sanskrit, he mentions Kṛṣṇa and Buddha *avatāra*.

मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहो नरहरिणपतिर्वात्मनो जामदग्न्यः ।  
काकुत्स्थः कंसघाती मनसिजविजयी यश्च कल्किर्भविष्यन् ॥  
विष्णोरंशावतारा भुवनहितकरा धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाः ।  
पायासुर्मात एते गुरुतरकरुणाभारखिन्नाशया ये ॥  
(श्री विष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रम्)

**Madhvācārya** was born on the auspicious day of *Vijaya-Daśami* in 1238c. C. E. at Pājaka, a tiny hamlet near Uḍupi. Traditionally it is believed that Nadillaya Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is the name of his father and Vedavati is the mother. They named him Vāsudeva at birth. Later he became famous by the names Pūrṇa-prajñya, Ānaṇdatīrtha and Madhvācārya.<sup>5</sup> The Works of Madhvācārya are many in number and include commentaries on the Vedas, Upaniṣadas, the Bhagavatagīta

<sup>4</sup> Deshmukh D.: Śrīmad ĀdiŚaṅkarācārya Viracita Stotrāvali, Part-1, Prasad Publication Pune-30, PP. 7

<sup>5</sup> Kulkarni Vinayak: Ācāryānce Vedānta Cintana āni Bhagavat Gītecyā Prabhāvāci Kṣetre, Gītādharma Publication, Pune-30

and the Brahma Sutras. Śrī Madhvācārya also composed many works on the philosophy of Tattvavāda.

There are two works, which are included in this collection, one is a *stotra* or hymn of praise; *Narasimha-nakhastuti* (App. A.15) and the other one is *Dvādaśa-stotra* (App.A.11, 12).

*Dvādaśa stotra* is a series of twelve *stotras* composed by Śrī Madhvācārya, ‘Dvādaśa’ in Sanskrit means twelve and all the twelve *stotras* are in praise of Lord Viṣṇu. These *stotras* were composed in connection with the installation of the idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Udupi. In the sixth and ninth *stotra*, the descriptions of ten *avatāra* have been given and Buddha *avatāra* is mentioned in both the *stotras*.

“*devakinandana nandakumāra vṛindāvanāñchana gokulachandra*  
*kandaphalāshana sundararūpa nanditagokula vanditapāda*  
*indrasutāvaka nandakahasta chandanacharchita sundarinātha*  
*indīvarodara daḷanayana mandara dhārin.h govinda vande*  
*chandrashatānana kundasuhāsa nanditadaivatānandasupūrṇa*  
*matsyakarūpa layodavihārin vedavinetra chaturmukhavandya*  
*kūrmasvarūpaka mandaradhārin lokavidhāraka devavareṇya .....*”

**Jayadeva** was a great Sanskrit poet (1200 c.C.E.) He is most known for his composition, the epic poem *Gīta Govinda*, which depicts the divine love of Kṛṣṇa and his consort, Rādhā, and it is considered an important text in the Bhakti movement.<sup>6</sup> It is a lyrical poetry that is organized into twelve chapters. Each chapter is divided into twenty four divisions called *prabandha*. The *prabandhas* contain different couplets called *Aṣṭapadas*. Jayadeva’s *Daśāvatāra stutī* ( App. A. 9) appears in the first *prabandha* of *Gīta Govinda*, which is “*Daśāvatāra*

<sup>6</sup> Anand Sadhale, *Gita Govind*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1983, Magestic book stall, Mumbai-4, Introduction.

Kīrtidhavalā”, rendered in *rāga* Mālavagaula and *tāla* Rūpaka, (as mentioned by some translators of Gīta Govinda.)<sup>7</sup>, and it is important to note that the ninth segment of this composition refers to Buddha as Viṣṇu’s *avatāra*.

**Vedānta Deśika** (Swāmi Desikan, Thoopul Nigamaantha Desikan) (1269 – 1370 c. C.E.) was conferred the title of *Sarva Tantra Swatantra* (master of all arts, crafts and artefacts) by Raṅganāyaki *thaayar*.<sup>8</sup> His writings include devotional works on different deities and Ācāryas, treatises on Viśiṣṭādvaita, commentary on the Bhagavad Gīta, Tamil poems, epic poems and dramas in Sanskrit and other treatises. His gloss on the meanings of the Vedas created history because it exposed the Divya Prabhandha of the Alvārs to a much wider audience and elevated it to a status equivalent to that of the Vedas in the eyes of the Tamil Vaiṣṇava people. Daśāvatāra *stotra* ( App. A, 20) of swami Desika begins with an introductory *Śloka*. He mentions the Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nrisimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Kalki *avatāra*. The last *Śloka* includes Phalaśruti.

Matsya

“*nirmagna śruti jāla mārṅaṇa dasā datakṣaṇair vīkṣaṇaih  
antah tanvadhiva aravinda gahanān oudanvathīnām apām |  
niśpratyūha taranga ringaṇa mitah pratyūḍa pātah chaḍā  
ḍola āroha sadohaḷam bhagavatah mātṣyam vapuh pātu nah ||*”

Kūrma

“*nirmagna śruti jāla mārṅaṇa dasā datakṣaṇair vīkṣaṇaih  
antah tanvadhiva aravinda gahanān oudanvatīnām apām |*

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid, PP.3

<sup>8</sup> Kulkarni Vinayak: Ācāryānce Vedānta Cintana āni Bhagavat Gītecyā Prabhāvāci Kṣetre, Gītādharma Publication, Pune-30

*niśpratyūha taranga ringaṇa mitah pratyūḍa pātah chaḍā  
ḍola āroha sadohaḷam bhagavatah mātsyam vapuh pātu nah ||.....”*

**Śrī Vādirājatīrtha** (1480-1600c. C.E.), is considered the second highest saint in the Madhva hierarchy, next only to Śrīmad Ānaṇḍa Tīrtha, even though his guru was Śrī Vyāsatīrtha. He worshipped Lord Viṣṇu in the form of Haya Vadana.<sup>9</sup> Śrī Vādirāja on his regular periodic victory travel (*digvijaya*) visited famous Pandharapura. During that time, one fine morning when he opened his box of worshipping idols (*Devara Pettige*, which contains worshipping idols and *Śāligrāmas*) he could not see his deity Śrī Hayagriva idol, but through his vision he could realise what had happened and started walking towards the Bhimārathi River. At the same time one farmer (Kṛṣīvala, one who does the farming of land) came running towards him and told him that Swāmiji's horse had eaten his nursery plants of Bengal gram (*khadale*) caused him huge loss and also told him to show the place where his horse had eaten his plants in the morning. The saint started walking towards the farmer's farm, the farmer also accompanied him. While going towards the farm Śrī Vādirāja started composing Śrī Daśāvatāra Stotra in Aśwa-Dhaṭi (*rāga* of horse footsteps) with utmost devotion. During that time one white horse came near them dancing, laughing and putting the footsteps according to the Swāmiji's *stotra* tune. On seeing the horse the farmer pointed Swāmiji towards the horse and told Swāmiji that the same horse had eaten his farm plants. Then Swāmiji assured him that he will take care of the horse and started going near to the horse, suddenly the horse disappeared from the scene. Farmer was surprised and astonished about the happening, the farmer and Swāmiji went and saw the place where the horse had eaten the Bengal gram plants. There they could see that where ever the horse had eaten the plants they saw golden

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<sup>9</sup>Bhattaru Acharyasaanur Bhima: *Vadirāja Virachita Daśāvatāra Stuti*, (Translated in to Kannada), Published by Sri Parimala Samshodhana and Publishing Mandira Nanajangud, Bangalore, 1995.

Bengal grams.<sup>10</sup> To the astonished farmer Swāmiiji told that the horse was none other than god Hayagrīva himself; and he has been blessed with the wealth and can live happily.

“*proṣṭhīśa vighraha suniṣṭhīva noddhata vishiṣṭhāmbuchāri jaladhe |  
koṣṭhāntarāhita vicheṣṭāgamaugha parameṣṭhiḍitattvamavamāmh |  
preṣṭhārkasūnumanu jeṣṭhārthamātmavidatīṣṭo yugānta samaye |  
stheṣṭhātma śṛṅgadhṛta kāṣṭhāmbuvāhana varā ṣṭāpadaprabha tano|| .....”*

Since that time this *stotra* is considered to be an initiative to get love from Śrī Hari and it has been a custom among the devotees to pray or worship through this *stotra* while concluding daily *pujā*. This practice is continuing in all Vaiṣṇava temples even today.

**Purandaradāsa** is famous among the Haridāsas of Karnataka; foremost among the Karnatic composers. He was born in Purandaragad in Ballary District near the town of Hampi in the year 1484. He was initiated in to the holy sainthood in 1525 c.C.E. by the great holy saint Vijasaraya Swāmi, who gave him the name Purandaradāsa.<sup>11</sup> His works have earned the name 'Purandaropaniṣat'. His compositions were on a variety of themes. In some of his verses, Purandaradāsa praises Lord Kṛṣṇa affectionately and in another he has even made fun of the Lord. His *kṛtis* bear the distinct stamp (*mudrā*) of Purandara Viṭṭhala. Purandaradāsa has composed a *maṅgalam* song (App.A.17) on the Daśāvatāra theme, offering benedictions to limbs of Viṣṇu from head to feet, by associating one limb with one *avatāra*. The song is sung in the *rāga Madhyamāvati*. His, another composition on the same theme is also very interesting, a conversation between goddess Pārvati and Lakṣmi (App.A.16)

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. PP.6

<sup>11</sup> Iyer Panchapakesha: (1992) Shree Purandara Gānāmṛutham, Published by Gānāmṛutha Prachuram, Madras-600028, PP.2



P: Pārvati ; L : Lakṣmi

*P: tarale tarale ranne kappu maiyava yātara caluvane ?*

*L: kariya jaṭeya jogiginta uttamanalavene ?*

*P: jaladhīyolu vāsavene? manegalu illave ?(Matsya)*

*L: lalane kelu kāḍiginta lesu allave ?*

*P: mandara giriya poththihudhu enu candave?(Kūrma)*

*L: kandana oydu aḍaviyalliḍuvudhu yāva nyāyave?*

*P: maṅṅanu agedu berannu meluvudhu enu svādhave ?(Varāha)*

*L: tanna kaiyalli kapāla piḍivudhu yāva nyāyave ?*

*P: muttina hāra iralu karula māleya dharisuvare ? (narasimha)*

*L: nithya runda māle dharisodu yāva nyāyave ?*

**Muthuswāmi Dikṣitar** (1775 – 1835c. C.E.), is one of the three immortals who were the makers of the present-day Carnatic music.<sup>12</sup> Muttuswami Dikṣitar travelled to many holy shrines throughout his life. There is hardly any song which does not describe a temple, the deity worshipped there and the tradition and customs prevalent locally. Muthuswāmi Dikṣitar composed a song depicting all ten incarnations of Viṣṇu; His creation is a *rāgamālikā* on the Daśāvatāra theme, but in praise of Lord Venkaṭeśvara of Tirupati. This is a rare piece. The *mudrā* (signature) “*guruguha*” appears in the second couplet of this song, also there is no “*rāgamudra*” (nomenclature of the *rāga* built into the text). It is set in *rūpaka tāla*, the featured *rāgas* are the five Ghana *rāgas*- Naṭa, Gauḷa, Śrī Ārabhi, Varāli, followed by

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<sup>12</sup> Parthasarathi T.S.: Muthuswāmi Dikṣitar, *Great Composers*, Ed. By Kuppuswami Gowri and Hariharan N., 2nd Ed.( 2005) CBH Publications, Nagercoil 629003, PP. 105

five Maṅgala rāgas- Kedāra, Vasanta, Surāṭi, Saurāṣṭra and Madhyamāvati (App.A.14) The ninth incarnation in this song is described as Balarāma. In this song, Dikṣitar attributes the tenth incarnation to Lord Venkaṭeśvara himself who is the presiding deity of this *kali-yuga*, rather than to the customary *avatāra*, Kalki. As can be seen in the last lines of this composition, Dikṣitar offers his prayers to Venkaṭeśvara of Tirupati, who is the saviour of all beings in this *kali yuga*.

“*mādhavo mām pātu matsyāvatāro vīdastīya duṣṭaharo vīdādi rakṣaṇah  
shrī*

*govidam namāmyaham guruguhanutakūrmāvatāram devarājādi pūjitam  
divyāmṛtapradam*

*shrīdhareṇa rakṣitoham bhūmipāla sūkareṇa hita devopakāreṇa  
hayAsurahati nipuNEṇa*

*narasihmāya namaste prahlāda prārthitāya hiraṇya prāṇaharāya  
harihayādi vanditāya.....”*

**Tyāgaraja** was born on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1767 in Tiruvarur. He was the greatest among the music composers of South India and one of the musical prodigies of all time.<sup>13</sup> His songs are accepted today as the only adequate interpretation of classical Carnatic Music from both the musical and the *sāhitya* points of view. He was the first composer in Carnatic music to have employed a set of ‘*saṅgatīs*’ or variations in each *kṛtis* to unfold, in their logical sequence, the possibilities of the *rāga* employed.

Tyāgaraja composed a song depicting all ten incarnations of Viṣṇu (App.A.22). His creation is in *rāga* Bhupala, Tāla Ādi on the

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<sup>13</sup> Parthasarathi T.S.: Tyagaraja, *Great Composers*, Ed. By Kuppaswami Gowri and Hariharan N., 2nd Ed.( 2005) CBH Publications, Nagercoil 629003, PP. 231

Daśāvatāra theme in praise of Lord Rāma. In *pallavi*, he says  
“*deenajanavana! Śri Rāma*”, saviour of the humble! Shri Rāma!

Tyāgaraja’s Daśāvatāra *stuti*-

*dīnajanāvana śrīrāma dānavaharaṇa śrīrāma vīna vimāna śrīrāma mīna śarīra  
śrīrāma |*

*nirmalahradaya śrīrāma kāmukabāṇa śrīrāma śarma phalaprada śrīrāma  
kurmāvatār śrīrāma |*

*śrīkarasugūṇa śrīrāma śrīkaralālita śrīrāma śrīkarūṇārṇava śrīrāma sūkara rūpa  
śrīrāma |*

*sarasijana śrīrāma surapativinuta śrīrāma nakhakheṣa śrīrāma narahari rūpa  
śrīrāma |*

*kāmitaphalada śrīrāma pāmara dūra śrīrāma sāmaja varada śrīrāma  
vāmanarūpa śrīrāma |*

*aghatimirāditya śrīrāma vigalitamoha śrīrāma raghukula tilaka śrīrāma  
bhṛṅgusutarūpa śrīrāma |*

*kuśalava janaka śrīrāma kuśaladacatura śrīrāma daśamukha marddana śrīrāma  
daśarathanandana śrīrāma |*

*kalimala haraṇa śrīrāma jalajabhavārcita śrīrāma salalita vacana śrīrāma  
haladhararūpa śrīrāma |*

*siddhajanapriya śrīrāma pra-siddha carita śrīrāma baddha suvasana śrīrāma  
buddhāvatār śrīrāma |*

*jayakara nāma śrīrāma vi-jayarathasārathe śrīrāma bhayanāśana hare śrīrāma  
hyamukharūpa śrīrāma |*

*bhāgavata priya śrīrāma āgamamūla śrīrāma nāga susāyana śrīrāma  
tyāgarājārcita śrīrāma |*

**Swāti Tirunal** (16<sup>th</sup> April 1813 to 27<sup>th</sup> December 1846) born into the  
Royal family of Travancore. His musical compositions consist of

about 400 compositions in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindustani, Telugu, and Kannada. All these devotional compositions are addressed to Lord Padmanābha or Mahā Viṣṇu<sup>14</sup>. He has composed several compositions addressed to Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, and Devi also.

Swati Tirunal's Sanskrit Daśavatāra *rāgamālikā* composition is very popular. The song starts with the phrase “*kamalajasyaḥṛta*” and employs the *rāgas* *Mohanā*, *Bilahari*, *Dhanyāsi*, *Śāranga*, *Madhyamāvati*, *Athāṇa*, *Nāttakuranji*, *Darbāri*, *Ānandabhairavi* and *Sauraṣṭra*. This *rāgamālikā* is set to *Ādi tāla* (App.A.21) The song narrates the incidents in each *avatāra*. Balarāma is mentioned as the ninth incarnation, and his killing the demon Pralamba is also indicated, the concluding phrase being “*pankajanabha*”, which Swāti Tirunal adopted as his *nāmamudrā*.

“*kamalajāsyāḥṛtanigamarāśihayagrīva-*  
*damana mīnaśarīra māmavodāra* ||

*dṛhtamandarabhūdhara divyakūrmārūpa*  
*pītasudhāmoditavibudhajāta* ||

*ghorahiranyākṣa dāraṇasūkarākāra*  
*vasudhādhāra jagadādhāra* ||

*prahlādāvanopāttapratibhayanṛhare*  
*prahlādītasajjana daityanidhana* ||.....”

**Tallapaka Annamācarya** lived in the 15th century C.E. The Daśavatāra composition of Annamācarya, is in Telugu language, the composition describes the two hands of Viṣṇu, and in each line, appropriately draws a parallel analogy to one of the ten *avatāra* (App.A.3).

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<sup>14</sup> Ilayaraja Marthandavarma: Swati Tirunal Maharaja-1, *Great Composers*, Ed. By Kuppaswami Gowri and Hariharan N., 2nd Ed.( 2005) CBH Publications, Nagercoil 629003, PP. 205

### 4.3 Daśāvatāra compositions in Marathi

#### 4.3.1 Earliest prominent Marathi poetry

The two poets from Mahatashtra, Dñyāneśvara and Nāmdeva wrote the earliest significant poetry in Marathi. They were respectively born in 1270C.E. and 1275C.E. in Maharashtra, India, and both wrote religious poetry. Sañta Eknātha, who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (1533-1599C.E.) was the next prominent poet in Marathi. The 17<sup>th</sup> century C.E. produced great poets Tukārāma (1598–1649C.E.) and Rāmdāsa (1608-1681C.E.). All prominent Marathi poets wrote either religious or semi-religious compositions. Many great composers of Maharashtra also turned their attention to the ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, and we find numerous songs, *bhakti-padas*, and Kīrtanas glorifying the ten *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.

The Mānasollāsa or the ‘Abhilaṣitārthacintāmañī’ is an encyclopaedic poetic work in Sanskrit language, composed in 1129 C.E. by Someśvara III (ruled 1126–1138c.C.E. the Western Calukya king of Kalyāṇi). Someśvara III had a special liking for music. His work Mānasollāsa is divided into 100 *adhyāyas* which are grouped into five chapters and each chapter deals with different topics like the means of acquiring a kingdom, methods of establishing it and also topics on royal enjoyment. It has information regarding ancient Indian art-craft, architecture, ornaments, sports, music and dance etc.<sup>15</sup> The Nṛtya-vinoda of Mānasollāsa does not mention the Daśāvatāra *hasta* but we find a song based on Daśāvatāra in the Gīta-vinoda, *adhyāya* sixteen.

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<sup>15</sup> Govindarajan Hema: (2001)The Nṛtyavinoda of Mānasollāsa A Study, Herman Publishing House, New Delhi-110028, PP.89

मानसोल्लासः ।

“अनेकदेशभाषाभिः स्वरैः पादैश्च तेत्रकाः । (न्नकैः)

चित्रिको परिक (:) बहुतालैश्च विचित्र (चित्रको)

.....

पाठान्यत्र प्रतिरागं नियोजयेत्(न) वंविधान्य(ने) ।

स्वरान् वर्ज्यान्परित्यज्य क्षिपेद्रागोचितान्स्वरान् ॥

तालान् भिन्नास्तथा तत्र न्यसेत्तत्र पदे पदे ।

पादास्तालानुसारेण तेन्नकान्यतिसंयुतान् ॥

एअवं कृत्वा पदन्यासं रागैस्तालैः समन्वितम् ।

स्वरैः पादैस्तथा तेन्नैर्गातव्योऽयं विचित्रकः ॥ ”

First two lines of this *gītī* are in Mahārāṣṭri Prākṛit and it is interesting to note that this *gītī* describes Buddha but there is no description of Rāma *avatāra*.

जेणे रसातळ उणु मत्स्यरूपे ,

वेद आणियले मनुशिवक वाणियले तो

संसारसायरतारण मोहंता रावो नारायणु ॥

May that Nārāyaṇa, who is the rescuer of men from the ocean of life, who in the form of Matsya brought out of the *rasātala* the Vedas and whom the people praised, protect me!<sup>16</sup>

बुध्दरूपे जो दावणसुरां वंचउणि,

वेददूषण बोल्लउणि

मायामोहिया तो देऊ माझि पासाऊ करु ॥

May that God, who in the form of Buddha, deceived both the Gods and Demons, who confounded the public by his *māyā*, bestow upon us favours!<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> G.K.Shrigondekar: Manasollasa of King Someshvara, Vol.Ⅲ ,Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961.PP.38

**Saint Nāmdeva**, a contemporary saint-poet of Saint Dñyāneśwara and is considered a religious saint-poet of Maharashtra. Saint Nāmdeva was born in the year 1270c.C.E. in the village of Narasi-Bamani in Maharashtra. He was the foremost proponent of the Bhāgvata-Dharma which reached beyond Maharashtra. Saint Nāmdeva spared the message of Bhāgvata-Dharma till Punjab. He also wrote some hymns in Hindi and Punjabi. His depth of devotion and talent in delivering Kirtana was of very high standard. Despite being a proponent of the Vārkarī sect, Saint Nāmdeva established religious unity across the country<sup>18</sup>. He has composed many *abhaṅgas* on the Daśāvatāra theme (App.B.10) In one of his *abhaṅgas* he has mentioned the *avatāra-sthānas*(App.B.11) for each incarnation. He mentions the Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nrisimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki *avatāra* in his another *abhaṅga* Daśāvatāra *varṇana* under the title Paurānik Kathānake (App.B.12)

**Janābāi** was a Marathi religious poetess in Maharashtra, who was born in the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>19</sup> She composed many religious verses in the *abhaṅga* form. Fortunately, some of her compositions got preserved along with *abhaṅgas* of Nāmdeva. Authorship of about three-hundred *abhaṅgas* is traditionally attributed to Janābai. However, researchers believe that few of her compositions belong to some other writers. In her Daśāvatāra *abhaṅga* (App.B.9) she has mentioned Buddha as the ninth *avatāra*.

होऊनिया कृष्ण कंस वधियेला ।

आतां बुध्द झाला सखा माझा ॥

**Saint Eknātha** (1533–1599c.C.E.) was a prominent Marathi Saint, scholar and poet. In the development of Marāthi literature, Santa

<sup>17</sup> G.K.Shrigondekar: (1961) Manasollasa of King Someshvara, Vol.Ⅲ ,Oriental Institute, Baroda,PP.39

<sup>18</sup>Jog Vishnu Narasimha: Saṅta Namadeva Maharaja Yānci Abhangāci Gāthā-No.3, 4th edition, November-(1957), Citaraśālā Publication, Pune-2,PP.253

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Part-6,PP.790

Eknātha is seen as a bridge between Dñyāneśwara and Nāmdeva and the equally noble Saint-poets Tukārāma and Rāmdās. Eknātha was born sometime around the 1530c.C. E. in an illustrious Brahmin family of Pratiṣṭhāna (Paithan today). Eknātha was responsible for the rediscovery of the great work of Dñyāneśwara, the first bard of Marathi literature, the epic poem the *Dnyāneśvari*, which had been forgotten like many Hindu epics after the grinding Muslim invasions<sup>20</sup>. Muslim invasions had left the people of Maharashtra demoralized during the intervening period between Dñyāneśwara and Eknātha. The people did not have their epics, their ballads, their poems to turn to. Eknātha saw that these had all been forgotten and the need of the hour was a revival the great epics and an education in the old values. Each of his compositions is unique and brilliantly crafted. Saint Eknātha composed many songs depicting all ten incarnations of Viṣṇu (App.B.2, 3) The ninth incarnation in some of his *abhaṅgas* is described as Kṛṣṇa. In these *abhaṅgas*, Eknātha attributes the tenth incarnation to Lord Viṭṭhala, rather than to the customary *avatāra* Kalki, as can be seen in the last lines of some of the compositions. Saint Eknātha also used the forms like *Gondhala* (App.B.5) and *Nandi* (App.B.4) for the Daśāvatāra *padas*, which are considered an important constituent of Maharashtrian Folk- ritual culture.

Amongst the various types of folk worshippers or performers in Maharashtra, Potrāja (App.B.6) are some such folk performers. They perform on *Marīāī* songs. Saint Eknātha has also mentioned Daśāvatāra in this folk song<sup>21</sup>.

*Eknātha- marīāī gīta*

“*cārī puruṣa prasamgī ghālunī,*  
*niramjanīm puṁḍalikāce dvārī baisonī,*

<sup>20</sup>Avate Tryambak Hari: Ekanatha Maharaja Yāñcyā Abhangāci Gāthā, (Shaka-1830), Gāthāpancaka (3<sup>rd</sup> Gatha ), Pune-2,PP.607

<sup>21</sup> Rane Sadanand: Lokaganga, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. (2012), Dimpal Publications, Thane-401202, PP.52



*bhakti puraskāronī, nivānta dekhilīm...  
macche kacche, vahārem, nārasimhe, vānem parasem,  
rāmem, kṛṣṇe, bauddhem, kalāmkiye...”*

**Rāmdāsa** (1608–1681c.C.E.) was a prominent Marathi saint and religious poet in the Hindu tradition in Maharashtra. Samartha Rāmdāsa was a devotee of Lord Hanumāna and Lord Rāma. Rāmdāsa Swāmi was a gifted composer. He produced considerable literature in verse form in Marathi. His philosophy reawakened the spirit of Maharashtra, but is equally valid and important for today's Indian values<sup>22</sup>. Most of his compositions are addressed to Lord Rāmacandra and Hanumāna. He has mentioned the reasons behind the Avatāravāda in his Dāsabodha.

नाना अवतार धरणेंदुष्टांचा संव्हार करणें ,  
धर्म स्थापाया कारणें विष्णूस जन्म ॥

(Dāsabodha, 10.4.41)

He has mentioned the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu in his *Manāce śloka*<sup>23</sup>(App.B.13). The disciple of Samartha Rāmdāsa, Shri Dinkarswāmi Tisgaonkar also mentions Daśāvatāra in his composition Swānubhavadinakara (App.B.1).

**Saint Tukārāma** (1608–1650c.C.E.) was a prominent Vārkarī *saṅta* and spiritual poet during the *bhakti* movement in India. Tukārāma is commonly known in Maharashtra as Saint Tukārāma. He was a devotee of god Viṭṭhala or Viṭhobā, a form of Kṛṣṇa. He was a proponent of Bhāgavata tradition, which is thought to have begun in Maharashtra with Saint Nāmdeva.<sup>24</sup> His compositions are known for

<sup>22</sup> Dāsabodha, Edited by Belsare K. V., 21<sup>st</sup> edition, (2009), Pub. Shri Samartha Seva Mandal, Sajjangad, Satara, Prastāvana.

<sup>23</sup> Shri Manāche śloka āni Karuṇāṣṭake, Anamol Publication, Pune, PP. 33-34

<sup>24</sup> Vishnubua Jog: Sārtha Tukaramaci Gāthā, 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. (1998), Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale Publications, Mumbai-400004.PP.10

the depth and soulfulness of the melody. Tukārāma also composed some *abhaṅga* depicting all ten incarnations of Viṣṇu (App.B.15).

Jogtī and Jogtīṅas are a kind of folk performers of Maharashtra<sup>25</sup>. Their performing worship associated with the goddess Reṇukā (mother of Paraṣurāma) or Yallamā. Jogtī and Jogtīṅas sing Jogvā-gīta which is a folk-devotional song. This is a rare Jogvā composition in which all ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are depicted in Yallamā gīta composed by Saint Eknātha.

### ***Yallamā gīta***

*yallamā ālī yallamā ālī, maccharūpī*

*yallamā ālī*

*śamkhāsuraṅce vadhāsī gelī, cārī veda gheūna ālī*

*mātā mājhī yallamā bhalī....*

*dharā rasātaḷāśī cālalī, kūrmerūpe*

*yallamā ālī.....*

*ambā daśabhujā naṭalī, daitya dānava mārūna ālī*

*kalirūpa pragaṭa jhālī, jaḷamaya karū gelī*

*camdrasūryāsī ājñā dilī, vaṭapātrī śayanīm jhālī*

*trividhatāpa ambā māulī, ekā janārdanī ambā*

*pāhilī...*

## **Observations**

An impressive number of Daśāvātāra compositions have been written in different Indian languages composed by great saint-poets of different periods. Thus, their lyrical content has a wide range. Most of the composers being great musicians as well as lyricists were

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<sup>25</sup> Rane Sadanand: Lokaganga, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. (2012), Dimpal Publications, Thane-401202, PP.59

*Vāggeyakāras*, so they composed the tunes and the lyrics simultaneously.

Most scholarship until now has treated this subject from the historical or theoretical point of view. In this descriptive survey of Daśāvatāra compositions, specific compositions are discussed mainly with respect to *sāhitya* (poetic text or theme). Musical descriptions of the selected compositions are tending to be limited to generalization. There are very few compositions in which the melodic frame of reference or *rāga* and *tāla* is specified.

Literature acts as a vehicle along the path of devotion since the theme of most Daśāvatāra compositions is devotional. It not only reflects the sentiments of the composer, but when rendered with involvement, reflects the emotions of the performer too. The physical structure of different compositions presents a very interesting study of literary beauty. However, no published study of a related subject of Daśāvatāra compositions with comprehensive analysis of musical and poetic structure is available.

It would be interesting to note that there are some special compositions which can be used exclusively in classical dance choreographies, like in certain *Padams*, *Varṇams* and *Śabdams* etc. There are compositions which can also be utilized for dance- dramas and *Darus* etc.

The Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement in Bengal was influenced by the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* tradition of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Sahajīya Buddhist and Nāthpanthi traditions<sup>26</sup>. These traditions focused on esoteric and emotional aspects of devotion. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Jayadeva was an important *bhakti* saint in this tradition. In Maharashtra the *bhakti* movement drew its inspiration from the

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<sup>26</sup> As reported on <http://History Book-Bhakti, Pdf, Cultural development in medieval India,14.2,PP.230-231>

Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Śiva Nāthpañthīs. Dñyāneśvara was a pioneer *bhakti* saint of Maharashtra. His commentary on the Bhagavad Gīta called Dñyāneśvarī served as a foundation of the *bhakti* ideology in Maharashtra. Arguing against caste distinctions he believed that the only way to attain God was through *bhakti*. Viṭhobā was the God of this sect. Nāmdeva was another important saint from Maharashtra. While he is remembered in the north Indian monotheistic tradition as a *nirguṇa saṅta*, in Maharashtra he is considered to be a part of the *vārkarī* tradition (the Vaiṣṇava devotional tradition). Some of the other important *bhakti* saints of Maharashtra were the saints Tukārāma and Eknātha. Tukārāma's teachings are in the form of the *abhaṅgas*, which constitute the Gāthā. Ekanātha's teachings that were in Marathi attempted to shift the emphasis of Marathi literature from spiritual to narrative compositions. *Bhakti* poetry and *bhakti* based narrative compositions (*Kathā-Kīrtana*), however also inspired actual drama literature for example, in the case of the Kṛṣṇāṭṭam of Kerala and also served as a vital source for popular forms of theatre, such as Bhāgavata-Mela Nāṭaka, both discussed later.

It can be concluded that the tradition of singing Daśāvatāra compositions by Marathi Vaiṣṇava composers must have been the source of inspiration for the later composers and also many folk worshippers or performers particularly in Maharashtra and thus narrative compositions of Daśāvatāra by Marathi Vaiṣṇava saints could be the source of inspiration for Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka literature. It also formed the strong background of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama of Maharashtra.

## CHAPTER-5

### DAŚĀVATĀRA IN INDIAN DRAMA

#### 5.1.1 Origins of Indian drama

The earliest known Indian drama have been traced back to the 1st century C.E. but many scholars believe that a living theatre tradition of India must have existed at an earlier date. Roughly speaking, we can divide the history of drama and dance in to three periods. The first is prehistoric and proto-historic. This period comprises the archaeological evidence found and the literary evidence which can be had from the Vedas, the Upaniṣadas, the Brāhmaṇas and the epics. While there are no literary records of the prehistoric period, in the Vedic period, Sanskrit exercised outstanding influence on the intellectual and artistic life of the people. Dance and music must have been a part of their religious celebrations. The rituals of the Vedic tradition also had the potential of developing into theatre art.

The second period may be considered from the 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. It was in this period that there was the first articulation of a self conscious understanding of this art. A monumental treatise like Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra laid down the foundation for classical Sanskrit drama in this period. In the third period, there was a marked development of regional architectural, sculptural, and pictorial, music dance and drama styles along with the development of regional literature.

The tradition of looking at drama not only as the written or the spoken word, but as a configuration of different types of communication techniques was established in India many centuries prior to the writing

of the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa.<sup>1</sup> This is evident from the codification of these drama techniques in the Nāṭyaśāstra. Later, some dramatists preferred to use only the verbal as the chief source of communication. Others depended more on music and poetry. From the Sanskrit Nāṭaka developed a new genre called the Uparūpakas. In this form there was a predominant role of music and dance movements. Indeed the beginnings of this type of plays can be traced back to the writings of Kālidasa. The tradition continues in the plays of Bhavabhūti, Harśa and also in the work of Rājaśekhara. Many examples of this could be cited from the dramatic works of the tenth century C.E. From this evidence, it is clear that the musical play was an important genre in the Sanskrit tradition.

Apart from the evidence which can be gathered from archaeological remains, sculptural reliefs, mural paintings and Sanskrit literature, there is the rich source of textual material. It would appear that soon after the Nāṭyaśāstra, works on aesthetic concerned mainly with discussion on the nature of the aesthetic experience and the literary form. By about the sixth century C.E., two distinct types of texts appear, the first were purely theoretical works which discussed the nature of aesthetic experience and the second group of treatises focused on the techniques of communication. All the Purāṇas, particularly early Purāṇas, namely the Agni Purāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, contain valuable sections on poetry, music, dance, painting and drama. Along with these texts some special texts appear which are devoted only to dance, music and poetry. In addition to that, in the ninth and tenth century Abhinavagupta wrote a commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra. He comments on all the sections of the treaties both from the point of view of philosophy as also form and technique of the arts.

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<sup>1</sup> Vatsyayan Kapila: Indian Classical Dance, published by the director, publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi-110001, PP. 3

The commentary of Abhinavagupta began a new phase of the evolution of different theories of aesthetic and artistic creation.

### 5.1.2 Characteristics of Indian Drama

Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra is the most important treaties which deal with the characteristics of Indian drama. Nāṭya, meaning drama or theatre and Śāstra means any authoritative text laying down authoritative principles and norms on a particular subject. Nāṭyaśāstra reveals certain special characteristics of Indian drama:

1. It is composed of rituals.
2. It is meant for an audience that is well-versed in Śāstra and the performance tradition.
3. A hereditary process of training.
4. It gives a complete understanding of Indian dance and music, recitation and rituals.
5. It must be performed with special knowledge and skill.
6. It serves a purpose to educate and entertain.

India has the longest and richest tradition in theatre art. In the tradition of NŚ, the concept of Nāṭya incorporates all the functions of theatre. Technically Nāṭya lies in the practice of the artist. Therefore, the word *prayoga* or performance can also be used in this context. This is the practical outlook with regards to the concept of Nāṭya and accordingly the definitions of Nāṭya to quote Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra can be simplified in the following terms:

*yoyam swabhāvo lokasya sukhadukḥ samanvitaḥ |  
soṅgadyabhinayopeto nāṭyamityabhidhiyate ||*

Prayoga and *abhinaya* are therefore invariably linked to Nāṭya but to understand Nāṭya in its totality, we must have to turn to its creative process starting from subtle psychological states and leading to the manifestation of Nāṭya in an audio-visual form.

*Na tat jñyānam na tat śilpam na sā vidyā na sā kalā |  
Nāsau yogo na tat karma nāṭyesmin yanan iśyate ||*

There is no other knowledge, no other sculpture; no other learning, no other art, not even yoga or any action which is not found in Drama.

Nāṭya is created on three levels. Firstly, a dramatic piece which is created by a poet or an author. This is taken up for the production on the stage by an actor. Visualisation of this performance by an audience forms the final stage of Nāṭya. Thus, a poet or dramatist is the first creator of Nāṭya.

## **5.2 Puppet Theatre**

### **5.2.1 The puppet styles from different states of India**

The Indian puppetry tradition spreads across the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra Orissa and Goa. The geographical and regional elements of these states have shaped the growth of leather puppetry within the respective states of India.<sup>2</sup> The regional languages too play an important role in the expression of this art form. Themes for puppet theatre are mostly based on epics and legends. Puppets from different parts of the country, has their own identity. Regional styles of painting and sculpture are reflected in them.

- Andhra – *Tholu Bommalāṭṭa* (*tholu*–leather, *bommalāṭṭa*–puppet dance)
- Assam and West Bengal–*Putal-nāch* (doll dance)
- Karnataka – *Gombe āṭa* (means–dance of dolls)

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<sup>2</sup> M.Srinivasa Rao and Rajyalakshmi, Puppetry in India, Journal of the Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Vol.VII,2004-2005,A.I.R.I.,G.D.Somani Memorial School Building, Cuff Parade, Mumbai-400005.pp.113



- Kerala – *Pava-kuthu* (glove puppetry) and *Thol pavakuthu* (leather puppetry)
- Orissa – *Kundhei-nāch*, (Shadow) *Rāvanacaya*, (Rod) *Kathi Kundhei* and (string) *Gopalila kandhei* forms.
- Rajasthan – *Kaṭhputali*
- Tamil Nadu – *Bommālāṭṭam* (string puppetry) and *Thol Bommālāṭṭam* (shadow puppetry).
- Maharashtra – *Kalasutri Bāhulyā*, (string puppetry), *Chāmdyāchyā Bāhulyā* (shadow puppetry)

The storytelling tradition served as the beginning point from which some theatrical performances later developed. The storytellers started to employ visual devices like panels, scroll paintings, shadow figures, puppets and even dolls to illustrate their narration.

The art of puppetry is being practiced for the different reasons<sup>3</sup>-

1. To invoke rain during drought
2. For a good harvest
3. To get rid of the epidemics
4. To prevent evil elements entering the region
5. To have a child

Once the role of puppet is decided it is painted with radiant colors and also given ornaments and other decorative adjuncts that go with the nature and character of the puppet. The female dancer among them has the greatest mobility and ornaments in its conception. The puppets are of several sizes ranging from one to six feet. As in the case of temple sculptures, the puppets also vary in size according to the moods and modes they portray. The nature, quality and also the role are the primary factors determine the size and shape of the puppets. Shadow

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<sup>3</sup>Leather Puppets, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Editor: Pratibha Wagh, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2010, PP. 4

puppetry existed in India as early as 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.<sup>4</sup> This tradition of the shadow puppets still survives in Maharashtra.

### 5.2.2 Puppet Theatre of Maharashtra

There are two types of puppetry forms prevalent in the state Maharashtra. They are the Kalasutri Bāhulyā, (string puppetry) and Cāmdyā cyā Bāhulyā (shadow puppetry).

A] *Kalasutri Bāhulyā*: These are small puppets without legs. The puppets have only two joints at the shoulders and manipulating strings are attached to the head and hands of the puppet. Themes or episodes from Rāmāyaṇa are narrated through folk tunes. This art form is almost on the brink of extinction in the state due to poor patronage and promotion.

B] *Cāmdyā Cā Bāhulyā*: Leather puppets are usually made up of goat skin which is cut to give the shape of the puppet characters. These shadow puppets have no jointed limbs. Some episodes from the great epics like Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata are narrated with the combination of folk music. This form is also in the brink of extinction and is prevalent only in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Making of these puppets had its origin in Kolhapur (Maharashtra)<sup>5</sup>. Being traditional in its form and content, the art has been inherited in the families, mostly by *maukhika* tradition. There is no script either of the craft or its lyrical counterpart.

It is interesting to note that all these puppet plays also start with an invocation to Gaṇapati. Among them the dancing Gaṇapati, the Utsava

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<sup>4</sup> M.Srinivasa Rao and Rajyalakshmi, Puppetry in India, Journal of the Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Vol.VII, 2004-2005, A.I.R.I., G.D. Somani Memorial School Building, Cuff Parade, Mumbai-400005, pp.113

<sup>5</sup> Leather Puppets, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Editor: Pratibha Wagh, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2010, pp.12

Mūrti and Saraswati are most popular and interesting. The ornaments are equally attractive. There are many varieties of different mythological characters among them some *avatāra* (PL.26, Fig. No. 1, 2, 3 and 4) also can be seen very attractively painted in different postures.

When the puppet is ready they first offer prayer and then bring it on screen. When these puppets are kept on the stage or stored, they approach it with respect and are worshiped once a week.

The shadow puppets called *Cāmdyācyā Bāhuliyā* (*Cāmde* meaning leather) and are mostly seen in the famous village of Pinguli on the border of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. Only the 'Thakore' community practises this art. They maintain a permanent stage in the village, but stages can be erected in temples and religious places. The group leader and the musicians speak the dialogue. *Dholak* and the brass instrument are used as instruments and musicians sit on both sides of the screen. During the performance, the dancer puppet performs first then Haridāsa comes as a narrator. These puppets use Paitān style of decoration. Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum has done a great job of collecting 3,038 leather puppets.<sup>6</sup>

## Observations

Whether the puppet theatre gave rise to the regular drama or vice versa is still a topic of much debate and deliberation. But the fact that Avatāra's of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa formed themes of presentation is of importance and relevance for the present study of the 'Daśāvatāra' as a theatrical presentation.

The puppet pictures also help us to analyze the costumes and design of the Daśāvatāra motifs used in the puppetry of Maharashtra. It is very

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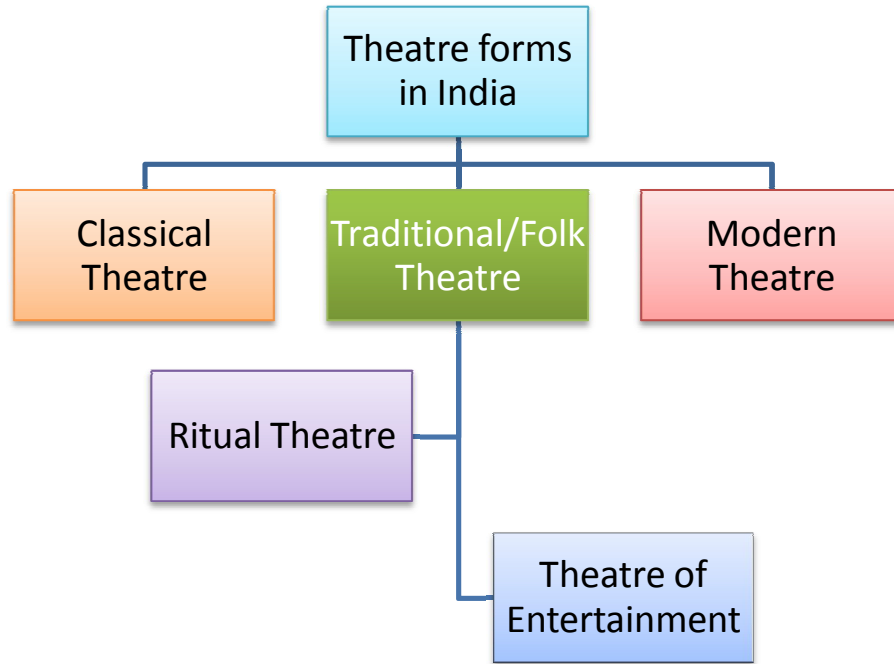
<sup>6</sup> Leather Puppets, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Editor: Pratibha Wagh, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2010, pp.11

interesting to note that when the puppet is ready they first offer prayer and then bring it on the screen a similar preliminary ritual is followed by the Daśāvatāra artist too. The artists offer prayer to the *petārā* before the performance. All puppet plays start with an invocation to Gaṇapati. Among them the dancing Gaṇapati and Saraswatī are the most popular likewise the Daśāvatāra play opens with a song in praise of Gaṇapati and Saraswati, both impersonated by actors. In the Daśāvatāra dance- drama the Sūtradhāra, known as *nāika* or Haridāsa, sings invocatory *ārtī* or *ślokas* and in puppet plays the artist who narrates the story is also known as *nāyaka* (the leader person) who sings hymns along with his companions. The Nāyaka holding the string is literally the ‘Sūtradhāra’, who in later theatre became the ‘Sūtradhāra’, who hold the scenes together by linking them through his narration. In order to perform the show Nāyaka, not visible to the audience, manipulates the strings attached to the puppets and brings alive the entire story.

The period of the performance may extend anywhere between three to twelve hours. Like most Indian folk drama, the whole presentation of this shadow play, invites a mixture of instrumental music, song, dance, dialogue and action.

## 5.3 Theatre in India

Roughly the Indian theatre can be divided into three distinctive kinds: the Classical theatre, the Traditional theatre and the Modern theatre.



### 5.3.1 Daśāvatāra mentioned in Sanskrit Dramas

The earliest form of the theatre in India was the Sanskrit theatre. The major source of evidence for Sanskrit theatre is Nāṭyaśāstra. A vital clue to how the Sanskrit play texts were enacted is to be found in the Nāṭyaśāstra's elaborate code of acting. It suggests how it was possible for audiences to understand dramas written in a combination of Sanskrit and in regional vernacular languages (Prakrits). The audience could follow the meaning of the play visually, through the codified system of hand gestures and facial expressions. Further, the manner in which the performer elaborated upon a situation, through movements,

gestures, and facial expressions lies in presentation of the *rasa*. Dr. V. Raghavan states that “dramatic form and theatrical technique are designed to reveal and to express emotional states and it is the audience’s response to these emotional states that is *rasa*”<sup>7</sup>. Kapila Vatsyayan describes how movement may have been used by the actors and dancers who performed Sanskrit plays in ancient India<sup>8</sup>. We find that slowly the Classical theatre declined paving the way for regional form of theatre in India. Kūḍiyaṭṭam is the only surviving specimen close to ancient Sanskrit theatre.

Bhāsa (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) is the one author who composed plays from the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Purāṇas, as well as other semi-historical tales. Bhāsa has mentioned some of the incarnations of Viṣṇu like Nārāyaṇa and Vāmana in an opening śloka of his plays. In the Sanskrit play Karṇabhāram he has mentioned the Nrisīṃhāvātāra and in another play Bāla-Caritam, he mentions Nārāyaṇa, Vāmana and Rāma *avatāra*.

Karṇabhāram and Bāla-Caritam<sup>9</sup>- (opening śloka):

Karṇabhāram

नरमृगपतिवर्ष्मा लोकेन भ्रान्तनारी ।

नरदनुजसुपर्वत्रातपाताललोकः ॥

करजकुलिशपालीभिन्नदैत्येन्द्रवक्षाः ।

सुररिपुबलहन्ता श्रीधरोस्तु श्रिये वः ॥1 ॥ ( by Sūtradhāra)

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<sup>7</sup> Raghavan V.: Sanskrit Drama in Performance, edited by Van Rachel, Baumer M. And Brandon J.R. published by Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1993, first edition, PP. 9

<sup>8</sup> Vatsyayan Kapila: Dance or Movement Techniques of Sanskrit Theatre, edited by Van Rachel, Baumer M. And Brandon J.R. published by Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1993, first edition, PP. 45

<sup>9</sup> Devdhar C.R., **Bhāsanāṭakam**, Published by Oriental Book Agency, Pune, 1951

Bāla-Caritam

शङ्क्षक्षीरवपुः पुरा कृतयुगे नाम्ना तु नारायण ।  
त्रिपदार्षितत्रिभुवनो विष्णुः सुवर्णप्रभः ॥ स्त्रेतायां  
दूर्वाश्यामनिभः स रावणवधे रामो युगे द्वापरे ।  
नित्यं योज्जनसंनिभः कलियुगे वः पातु दामोदरः ॥1 ॥ (by Sūtradhāra)

Kṛṣṇa-drama in India is at least as old as the Bāla-caritam of Bhāsa. This play was written about 400c.B.C.E. In its opening *ślokās* mention has been made of some incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu like Nārayaṇa, Vāmana, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa<sup>10</sup> etc.

### 5.3.2 Daśāvātāra mentioned in Prakrit Kāvya

Gāthā Saptaśatī (200 BCE and 200 CE) is a collection of poems attributed to the king Hāla is in Mahāraṣṭri Prakrit. It consists of 700 single-verse poems divided into 7 chapters. All the poems are in the *ārya* metre. In this collection of Prakrit couplets by Hāla Sātvāhana, we find references to the Avatāra of Lord Viṣṇu such as Kṛṣṇa (G.89, 112, 114, 447, 968), Rāma (G.35), Vāmana (G.406) and Trivikrama (G.411).<sup>11</sup> The Gāthās, known for their faithful recording of contemporary folk culture, give evidence of the popularity of the Kṛṣṇa Kathā and dance-drama tradition.

बळीबन्ध – Gāthā- 406 (pp. 272)

बलिणो बाआबन्धे चोज्जं णिउअत्तणं च पअडन्तो ।  
सुरसत्थकआणन्दो वामणरूवो हरी जअइ ॥6 ॥

<sup>10</sup> Manohar Laxman Varadpande, Religion and theatre, 1983, Abhinava Publications, New Delhi-110016

<sup>11</sup> S.A. Jogalekar, Hāla Sātvāhanāchi Gāthā Saptaśatī, 2012, Padmagandha Publication, Pune, 38, PP.196-198

बलेर्वाचाबन्धे आश्चर्यं निपुणत्वं च प्रकटयन् ।  
सुरसार्थकृतानन्दो वामनरूपो हरिर्जयति ॥

त्रिविक्रम - Gāthā- 411 (pp. 276)  
अपहृप्पनां महिमण्डलम्मिणहसंठिअं चिरं हरिणो ।  
तारापुप्फप्पअरञ्चिअं व तइअं पअं णमह ॥11॥

अप्रभवन्महीमण्डले नभःसंस्थितं चिरं हरेः ।  
तारापुष्पप्रकशञ्चितमिव तृतीयं पदं नमत ॥

‘Gauḍavaho<sup>12</sup>’ is a Prakrit *mahākāvya* written by Vākpatiraja in 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E., who was contemporary of Bhavabhuti. The theme of the poem is historical and it begins with homage to a number of gods and goddesses. The metre of the whole poem is *āryā*. The principal sentiment is Heroism that is Vīra Rasa of which the hero is ‘*Yuddha-Vīra*’.

This poem is a Praśasti-Kāvya of the patron King Yaśovarman, who in the Gauḍavaho is often referred to as an incarnation of the great god Viṣṇu (śloka no. 1039). Scholars believe that Viṣṇu's role as a preserver arose from the characteristic practice of assimilating local legendary heroes and gods into the Hindu pantheon by attributing their deeds to one of the major Hindu deities. This statement can be supported by the study of ancient Indian coins and numismatic evidence.

Vākpatirāja has mentioned almost all the gods and the goddesses in an invocation. He begins with Brahmā, and then comes the dark-complexioned Viṣṇu, leisurely reposing on the luminous surface of the oceanic flood-waters of the deluge. This description is followed by the description of Viṣṇu's incarnation: First comes the man-lion (Narasimha) who threw the demon on his lap and in his fury tore open

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<sup>12</sup> Gauḍavaho, Edited by Suru N.G., Prakrit Text Society, Series No. 18, Ahmadabad-9, Varanasi-5, 1975.



his chest with His claws then the great Boar who supported the submerged earth on His tusk. The Dwarf who tried to compress the worlds in His small belly; the Tortoise who bore the earth's burden on his back; Kṛṣṇa, the child of Yaśodā and the young lover of Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa, in the company of his elder brother Balarāma, who brought the river Yamuna at His feet.

#### Kūrma

जअइ धरमुद्धरंतो भर-णीसारिअ-मुहग्ग-चलणेण ।

णिअ-देहेण करेण व पंचंगुलिणा महा-कुम्मो ॥

(जयति धरामुद्धरन् भरनिःसारितमुखाग्रचरणेन ।

निजदेहेन करेणैव पश्चाङ्गुलिना महाकूर्मः ॥)

Victorious is the Great Tortoise lifting the sunken earth with His body, as with a hand, with his out-stretched five fingers, since, under the pressure of the Earth, His mouth-tip and four feet happened to be pushed out (*nīsāria*).

#### Narasimha

असुरोरट्ठि-णिहंसण-विसट्ठ-धूमावलंबि-णह-हीरो ।

रव-रोस-गहिअ-घण-मंडलो व्व णर-केसरी जअइ ॥

(असुरोरोऽस्थिनिघर्षणविकसितधूमावलम्बिनखप्रांतः ।

रवरोषगृहीतघनमण्डल इव नरकेसरी जयति ॥)

Victorious is the Man-Lion with his sharp nail-tips enveloped in smoke issuing from the friction of the Demon's chest-bones (*uraṭṭhi*), thus appearing as if He had seized in His clutches a mass of clouds in His roaring fury.

तं णमह समोसरिआ णहग्ग-विहडाविओरवीढस्स ।

जस्स दइच्चम्मि अलध्द-ववसिअच्चेअ भुअदंडा ॥

(तं नमत समवसृता नखाग्रविघटितीरःपीठस्य ।

यस्य दैत्येऽलब्धव्यवसाया एव भुजदण्डाः ॥)

Bow to Him (Narasimha) whose massive hands were withdrawn, finding no other task (*vavasāa*) to accomplish, since the Demon had his broad chest torn open by only the tips of His claws.

Kṛṣṇa

बालत्तणम्मि हरिणो जअइ जसोआएँ चुंबिअं वअणं ।

पडिसिध्द-णाहि-मग्गुध्द-णिग्गअं पुंडरीअं व ॥

(बालत्वे हरेर्जयति यशोदया चुम्बितं वदनम् ।

प्रतिषिध्दनाभिमार्गोर्ध्वनिर्गतं पुण्डरीकमिव ॥)

Victorious is the mouth of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) kissed by Yaśodā in His infancy - the mouth that looked like a lotus shooting upwards, as it were, having been denied the outlet of the navel.

Balarāma

पणमह बलस्स हुंकारभअ-वसा घोलमाण-जउणे व्व ।

मअ-दोस-सिढिल-कसणावरिल्ल-संदाणिए चलणे ॥

(प्रणमत बलस्य हुंकारभयवशाद् धूर्णमानयमुनाविव ।

मददोषशिथिलकृष्णोत्तरीयसंदानितौ चरणौ ॥)

Bow to the feet of Balarāma, fastened together (*Samdāṇia*) by his black upper garment slipping down through the effects of intoxication, thus giving an impression of the Yamunā river rolling on his feet, being frightened of his angry grunts.

## 5.4 Daśāvātāra mentioned in Indian Dramatic Treaties

### 5.4.1 Nāṭyaśāstra

According to Nāṭyaśāstra, Bharata enumerated ten kinds of dramas. In the chapter 22<sup>nd</sup>, he says that *vṛtti* emanated from Viṣṇu's deeds.

The Nāṭyaśāstra contains an account of the first performance given by Bharata. The first drama staged was Amṛtamanthana. But there is no

evidence of Kūrma *avatāra* and we are left to surmise from the scanty data available in the text, that Viṣṇu as Kūrma lifted and steadied the mountain. The fact is clear that the concept of the Daśāvatāras of Viṣṇu was not yet formulated during the period of NŚ.

#### 5.4.2 Daśarūpaka

The Daśarūpaka, is treatise on the forms of drama composed by Dhanamjaya in the last quarter of the tenth century C.E. during the reign of Vākpatirāja II. The author begins this work with two stanzas of invocation. The first line of the second stanza refers to the ten forms of Viṣṇu.

*daśarūpānukāreṇa yasya mādyanti bhāvakāḥ  
namaḥ sarvavide tasmai Viṣṇave Bharatāya ca ||*

‘Homage to that omniscient Viṣṇu whose senses revel in the semblance of his ten forms, and to Bharata, whose poetic sensibilities revel in the imitation of the ten forms of drama.’<sup>13</sup> The relationship between Viṣṇu’s incarnations i.e. Daśāvatāra and the kind of plays mentioned by Bharata as Daśarūpaka is the same.

#### 5.4.3 Bhāvaprakāśanam

Bhāvaprakāśanam by Śāradātanaya (13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) mentions:

नृसिंहसूकरादीनां वर्णना कल्प्यते यतः ।  
नर्तकी (नृत्तगी)तेन भाणः स्यादुद्धताङ्गप्रवर्तितः ॥  
(भावप्रकाशनम्, IX Adhikarana, pp.389)

The ‘Bhāṇa’ a type of *rūpaka* uses Narasimha and Varāha *avatāra* stories as its subject, with musical accompaniment and dance gestures

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<sup>13</sup> George C.O. Haas, The Daśarūpa, A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy by Dhanamjaya, Motilal Banarasidass, Varanasi-1, 1962, PP.1

and movements (*uddhatāṅga*). What Bhāvaprakāśanam says here is similar to Bhoja's views in Śringaraprakāśa.

'Bhāṇa' is a popular type of drama, mentioned in Nāṭyaśāstra and we can observe the development of this type of drama from the scripts that are available since about 5<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century C.E. The shifting pattern of drama is also reflected in the description about the Bhāṇa in theory.

The features of Bhāṇa described by Bharata are repeated by later theorists, with elaboration or addition of some details, but Bhāvaprakāśanam's concept of 'Bhāṇa' becomes more important because of the theme content. When the Bhāṇa uses Haricarita, the life of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa as its subject and presents it in the metrical Gāthās, with nine or ten themes, all in tender mode (*sukumāra prayoga*) with correct musical accompaniment and graceful dance gestures and movements (*lalita-karaṇa-saṁyukta*), the Bhāṇa becomes Bhāṇikā. The Bhāṇa play transformed in this way is also referred as Nandimāli. Apart from the difference in presentation technique there is a difference of theme as well as subject of the play.

It would be interesting to note some points, how Bhāṇa is conceived in Bhāvaprakāśanam and Nāṭya-mañjiri-saurabham (NMS):

- 1) A *stuti-nibāṇḍha* describing Viṣṇu, Śiva, Bhavāni and Skandha.
- 2) The praise is offered in songs with the accompaniment of musical and percussion instruments, where different time measures are used along with pauses.
- 3) The presentation is loud and vigorous (*uddhata-Karaṇa-prayoga*) and women are excluded from it.
- 4) The songs also include praises of kings.
- 5) From the mode of presentation Bhāṇa may have three varieties:
  - a) Uddhata- Violent and forceful content.

- b) Lalita- Tender and graceful movements are gracefully presented.
- c) Lalitoddhata- A mixture of violence and grace, from the point of view of language.
- 6) A Bhāṇa using Suddha Bhāsha (Sanskrit) and rhythmic time measures in stated order will be Śuddha, a mixture of languages (Sanskrit and Prakrit) and of two or three tālas will make Saṅkīrṇa, and if many languages are used and different tālas disregarding the specified order, the Bhāṇa becomes Citra.
- Apart from the striking difference in the presentation technique we cannot miss the essential difference of the theme and the subject as well.

All later theorists suggest that the theme of a Bhāṇa is concerned with Śṅgāra or Vīra. There are a number of Bhāṇas (mostly of the late period) which generally use only an erotic theme. As far as the Haricarita, which also supposed to be the subject or the theme of a Bhāṇa, Bhāvaprakāśanam's view deserves to be seriously considered.

So it is quite possible that the themes related to the Haricarita like Narasimha and Varāha *avatāra* in particular and also to different *avatāra* of Viṣṇu were the subject of the Bhāṇa presentation. These were composed and presented by the Vīta (the sole character) in Bhāṇa between 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. but we cannot conclusively and definitely say that the tradition of staging full- fledged Daśāvatāra plays in which all the ten *avatāras* were brought on the stage one after another has its origins in Bhāṇa presentations.

## 5.5 Traditional Theatre in India

The design of the Sanskrit play production analysed and examined previously was fully evolved and flourishing by the time of Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra (200B.C.E.- 200 C.E.). By the time of Abhinavagupta (875 C.E.-1015 C.E.) and later dramaturgists and commentators, a long period of rich and sophisticated Sanskrit theatre tradition with different emphasis on the styles of presentation had reached its peak and had subsequently entered a phase of decline<sup>14</sup>. The gradual deterioration in its continuity came around twelfth century C.E. with the emergence of the regional languages causing the decline of Sanskrit language. Consequently, the development of ten major *rūpakas* and eighteen minor *uparūpakas* which had evolved out of the rich intermixes of the court and temple theatres and popular dramas were affected in the process. And the *uparūpakas* with emphasis on dance, song, abhinaya and lesser stress on speech and the written texts got adapted into the regional requirements.

However, regardless of the decline of the Sanskrit theatre the techniques and conventions of its production did not disappear altogether. It continued in other new forms of regional theatres. In the wake of Bhakti movement, a new form of art (Harikathā) was generated in most regions in India. Harikathā was a form of performing art where devotional episodes of the epics, *purāṇas* and the Bhāgavata were communicated to the people through songs, narration, *abhinaya* and other *nāṭya* conventions<sup>15</sup>. There were special groups of theatre performers of distinct caste who performed them. This hereditary caste of theatre artists toured and finally settled in different parts of the country. They even succeeded in getting patronage of Indian kings and rich landlords of various regions who allowed them to have their performances in the palaces or in the temple premises. The

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<sup>14</sup> Mehta Tarla : Sanskrit Play Production in Ancient India, Published by Motilal Banarasisass, Delhi, 1999, revised edition, PP. 253

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, PP. 253

*cāraṇa*, who is called either a *Sūtradhāra* or a *bhāgavata* or a *nattuvara* or a *nāyaka* or a *pāṭhaka* in some folk drama forms, enacted epic stories through his art of *nāṭya abhinaya* by adopting it to the distinctive regional varieties<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the techniques and conventions of a Sanskrit play production reached larger sections of the people of India. Some of the present-day regional theatre forms, which retain the ancient Indian drama traditions, can be traced back to this period. And in almost all of them, a uniformity of a design of production is found with rich variation of local characteristics.

Ankiā Nāṭ, Bhāṇḍ Pāther, Bhavai, Burra Kathā, Daśāvatāra, Jatrā, Kṛṣṇāṭṭam, Kūdiyaṭṭam, Kurvanjī, Māch, Muḍiyēṭṭu, Nauṭanki, Rāslīla, Tamāśā, Ojā-Pali, Theyyām, Swāṅg, Therukūtthu, Yakṣagāṅga etc. are the different forms of traditional theatre in India. All these forms are distinguished by similar structure and performing techniques, but they reflect stylistic variations and the music shows the influence of local traditions. As in classical Sanskrit theatre, music and dance are essential elements of traditional drama presentations.

The traditional theatre of India is as rich and varied in forms and presentational style as the theatre of the literary tradition. It is also an important element of the traditional culture, both manifesting and sustaining its elements. As it evolves and survives within the socio-cultural life of the community it reflects the beliefs customs, ceremonials and rituals of the people. Traditional theatre continues to be a living and vital theatre in entertaining mass rural audiences. It also helps preserve traditional culture and disseminate epic and legendary stories containing social ideas and life values. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was pushed to the background by the modern realistic theatre and western dramatic values. After

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<sup>16</sup> Mehta Tarla : Sanskrit Play Production in Ancient India, Published by Motilal Banarasisdass, Delhi, 1999, revised edition, PP. 254

independence in the year 1947 there was a renewed interest in traditional and folk theatre as part of the cultural resurgence. Plans and programs were initiated to preserve and promote the traditional arts. As a result of personal exploration of the traditional theatrical heritage, several playwrights and directors started making creative use of the elements and techniques of traditional theatre. This contact between contemporary and traditional theatre has also contributed to the revitalization and renewal of traditional theatre.

### 5.5.1 Daśāvātāra and Traditional Theatre

The traditional and folk dramas mostly draw their themes from the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the *purāṇas* and Hindu mythological lore. The religious overtones and high sense of drama in these tales make them ideal story material for the traditional theatre, which emphasizes the elements of spectacle, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa

Senior dance critic and scholar Dr. Sunil Kothari remarks that inscriptions of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries reveal that in Andhra, Tamilnadu and Karnataka, a variety of theatrical diversions composed of music, dance and drama known as Brahmaṇa Mela existed<sup>17</sup>. Though there are no conclusive proofs available it is certain that prototypes of the Bhāgavat-Mela *nāṭaka* must have survived prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Even earlier, there existed another form of entertainment known as Śivalilānāṭyam, describing the various activities of Lord Śiva in poetic form, which was performed at Śiva temples and Viṣṇulilānāṭyam, depicting the ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, was presented at Viṣṇu temples<sup>18</sup>. The Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement and the resultant cultural renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries enriched the arts of poetry, music, dance-drama

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<sup>17</sup> Kothari Sunil/ Pasricha Avinash, Kuchipudi Indian Classical Dance Art, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, (2001), Abhinav Publications, New Delhi- 110016, PP. 29

<sup>18</sup> Ibid PP. 29



and painting in India. The temple, having become the centre of artistic activity, began to reshape drama in a formal manner. Bhāgavata Mela theatre developed out of Vaiṣṇava devotionism. The spirituality and *bhakti* movement resulted in a great following of religion, poetry, music and art throughout the Indian sub-continent. The net result was the emergence of traditional theatre performances in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. which set their roots in Andhra Pradesh. From the south India, theatre forms like Kuchipudi Bhāgavatam (Andhra Pradesh), Melattur Bhāgavata Mela (Tamil Nadu), Toorpu Bhāgavatam (north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh), and Chindu Bhāgavatam (Northern Telengana parts of Andhra Pradesh) came to light. These performances, except those of the modern theatre, are known by genre-specific names in their local languages- Yakṣagāna, Rāsālila, Terukkuttu etc. An endless stream of names, each with its own history and reasons for having been given that name came into being. They did not follow any modern theatre norms. They were more stylized than the folk tradition. So these theatre forms came under the shadow of traditional theatre performances.

Bhāgavata-Mela *nātakas* of Melattur consist of those composed by Melattur Venkatarāma Sastry. He composed many *nṛṭyanātakas*. The themes of Melattur Bhāgavat-mela are chosen from the popular *purāṇic* tales found in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. The *nātakas* are Prhalāda Caritamu, Hariścandra Nāṭakam, Hari Hara Līlā Vilāsamu etc. All the compositions are highly influenced by *bhakti*. His compositions also include *curṇikas*, *campakamālās*, *daruvus*, *dwipadas*, *khaṇḍarthas*, *padas*, *pada-varṇas*, *padyams*, *saṅdhi vacanas* and *tillānas*. All these compositions are in Telugu language only. In his composition of *daruvus*, he has employed all kinds of *daruvus* like *pravesha daruvu*, *Saṁvāda daru*, *Uttara-Pratyuttara daruvu*.<sup>19</sup> It would be interesting to

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<sup>19</sup> N.J. Jayakar: Ethnography of Bhāgavata performances, 1996, Chap. III, PP.6

note that the only available Daśāvatāra script<sup>20</sup> also includes *curñikas*, *padas*, *vacanās* and *tillānas* etc. Therefore, we can say that the performance tradition of this Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka which was brought in Maharashtra by a Brahmin *kīrtankara* Śri Shyamji Naik Kale had the influence of the *kīrtana* tradition of Maharashtra or in different words the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Śri Shyamji Naik Kale has its origin in the *kīrtana* tradition of Maharashtra.

Around the time of Rāmadāsa, Yakṣagāna theatre emerged in Karnataka. These Yakṣagāna plays are also known as Daśāvatāra Aṭa, because they present the mythical stories connected with the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. The earliest available Yakṣagāna play ‘Virāṭaparva’ is datable to 1564 CE.<sup>21</sup> Though known as Daśāvatāra Aṭa they do not depict the cycle of ten incarnations in a single play. However in the Maṅgala gīta sung at the end of the Yakṣagāna plays the Daśāvatāra are mentioned and propitiated. This is positive evidence connecting Yakṣagāna with the tradition of Daśāvatāra plays. We also find some Kannada words and songs included in Daśāvatāra plays of Goa and Konkan region. According to some scholars Daśāvatāra came to Goa from Karnataka<sup>22</sup>. Goa and Karnataka were under the Vijayanagar Empire from 1367 C.E. to 1468 C.E. and some parts of Goa were under Kanarī Sonḍkar rulers up to 1781c.C.E.

All the forms of Vaiṣṇava drama are interrelated in the sense that they are regional variations of the countrywide theatre movement inspired by the Bhāgavata or Vaiṣṇava movement. Vaiṣṇava drama flourished in the region under the patronage of temple institutions.<sup>23</sup> These dance drama forms are very close to Bharata’s Nāṭyaśāstra in their

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<sup>20</sup> Raghunath Krushna Patankar: Maharashtra Sahitya Patrika, Year-6, Anka-1, March,1933, PP.39-42

<sup>21</sup> Manohar Laxman Varadpande: Religion and theatre , Abhinava Publications, 1983, PP.98

<sup>22</sup> Ibid- PP. 100

<sup>23</sup> Ibid- PP.101

conception if not in their technique. Kṛṣṇa Aṭṭam and Kathakali of Kerala, Yakṣagāna of Karnataka, Kuchipudi of Andhra, Bhāgavat mela of Tamil Nadu, Bhaona or Ankia Nāt of Assam, Līla plays of Uttar Pradesh, Rās of Gujarat and Manipur all belong to the same tradition. All these theatrical forms show unity in their format in spite of their linguistic diversity. These are in one way or another connected with Daśāvatāra themes, though their execution differs.

In the Rāsīlā of Vrindavan sometimes the ten incarnations are shown on the stage. In the Kuchipudi play Bhāmā Kalāpam the heroine Satyabhāmā while describing Kṛṣṇa mentions his ten incarnations and shows all of them on the stage through dance and abhinaya. This portion is known as ‘Daśāvatārabhinayam’.

Daśāvatāra is the most developed traditional dramatic form of Maharashtra and Goa region. The coastal region of Goa and Konkan is known from ancient times as a cradle of dramatic arts. The Tamil classic Śīlappadikāram mentions Konkan actors and dancers who entertained the Cera king, Senguttuvan (the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E.)<sup>24</sup> Laḷita is the most ancient dramatic forms in which Daśāvatāra are mentioned in the *pūrvāṅga*.

Of all the dramatic forms mentioned earlier the traditional Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of North Konkan region is unique and the efforts are taken to accommodate as many of the incarnations as possible in a single performance. Of course some of the incarnations like Matsyāvatāra, Nṛsiṃhavatāra, Rāmāvatāra and Kṛṣṇāvatāra are played prominently. The Daśāvatāra drama has the background of Laḷita, Tamāśa and Bhārud plays which were immensely popular. These plays used to be extempore and topical in their story material and dialogues. No stage

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid-pp. 100

was required and no scenery either<sup>25</sup>. The treatment generally used to be coarse and obscene and the mode of the acting was *nāṭyadharmi*. The modern professional theatre and these medieval forms of plays, however soon parted company and began catering independently to their own different classes of audiences.

The credit of evolving a full-fledged Daśāvatāra play depicting the ten incarnations of Mahāviṣṇu goes to Maharashtra and Gomantaka and the regions around.

In some parts of the country the tradition of Daśāvatāra plays developed differently. In the tradition of Daśāvatāra plays which developed in Maharashtra, all the ten *avatāras* were brought on the stage one after another and episodes connected with the major incarnations were presented elaborately. The remains of this tradition still linger in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

## **5.6 Elucidation of the Daśāvatāra in Bhakti Literature**

The spiritual story-telling in India has been in existence from the Vedic period. India is a nation with many States, with each State having its own language and tradition. Each State has its own way of spiritual story-telling; both in classical type and folk type, and these have developed in various ways along with the growth of their local tradition.

The idea of reciting and expounding the spiritual texts, sitting on a dais, slowly underwent different changes and eventually in the seventeenth century C.E., in the state of Maharashtra, it developed into what is known today as Harikathā. But it itself is the development of Kīrtana, and the roots of Kīrtana go back to the time of Saint

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<sup>25</sup> K. Narayan Kale, Theatre in Maharashtra, 1967, Maharashtra Information centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi.

Nāmdeva and Dñyāneśwara in the thirteenth century. During and around the thirteenth century, the Saints of Maharashtra started a new movement of Bhakti, which was called the Bhāgavata *sampradaya*, meaning the tradition of the devotees of God. In Maharashtra Harikathā is popularly known as Harikīrtana or Kīrtana, and in South India this art form is known as Harikathā Kālakṣepa, Kathā Kālakṣepa or Kālakṣepa. Samartha Rāmadasa equates Kīrtana and HariKīrtana to Harikathā in his work Dāsabodha. Kīrtankāra is the name popularly used in Maharashtra to address the performers of Harikathā. But generally the performer of Harikathā is called Bhāgavata. This name is used for both male and female artists of Harikathā.

It would be interesting to note that according to Samartha Rāmdāsa, a Harikathā *bhāgavata* should have an excellent knowledge of the Scriptures, musical knowledge, a good voice, dramatic talent, and extempore speech, knowledge of several languages, humour, dance, and devotion to God etc. Originally Harikathā Kīrtana was performed by devotees mostly of Lord Viṣṇu and His incarnation, especially the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa. The stories for narration were taken mainly from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Harikathā has a definite shape and purpose. It has a *nirūpaṇa* or introductory part. Samartha specifically instructed in his work Dāsabodha that the *nirūpaṇa* part should contain philosophical teachings from the scriptures, and the *ākhyāna* part should contain stories from *paurāṇic* literature that will illustrate the philosophical teachings in the form of stories. Harikathā performers follow this *paddhati* or tradition even today.

Harikathā is a well-defined art form presenting a story or *caritram* in a given order with certain songs and musical forms sung at particular places in the story, interspersed with scriptural quotations. The body of a Harikathā is divided into two parts: *pūrvāṅga* or first part and *uttarāṅga* or latter part. They are called *nirūpaṇa* and *ākhyāna*. It

would be interesting to observe the format of Harikathā, which is mentioned in the book Harikathā, by I.P. Meera Grimes. The first part that is Nirūpaṇa of the Harikathā consists of Dhyāna Śloka, Nāma Saṅkīrtana then Pañcapadi, Puṇḍarīka, Prathama Pada or Nāma Siddhānta and Tillana. The second part consists of Kathā, Phalaśruti, Maṅgaḷam and Puṇḍarīkam.<sup>26</sup>

Bhakti poetry, however also inspired actual drama literature, for example, in the case of the Kṛṣṇāṭṭam of Kerala. It also served as a vital source for popular forms of pilgrimage theatre, such as Kṛṣṇalīla and Rāmalīla.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is one of the "Mahā" Puranic texts of Hindu literature, with its primary focus on *bhakti* (devotion) towards the incarnations of Viṣṇu, particularly Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata includes many stories well known in Hindu tradition, including the various *avatārs* of Viṣṇu and the life of Kṛṣṇa. It also includes instruction in the practice of *bhakti*, an analysis of *bhakti*, and descriptions of the different types of *bhakti*. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa contains apparent references to the South Indian Alvār saints and it makes a post fact prophecy of the spread of Viṣṇu worship in Tamil country (BP XI.5.38–40).

Saint-poets who lived between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E., in South India were called Alvārs'. They composed the most important early Bhakti poetry in any Indian language. The collection of their hymns are known as 'Nālayira Divya Prabandham'. The Nālayira Divya Prabandham is performed in the form of *abhinaya* known as 'Ārayāra Seva' in Śrīraṅgam temple for the festival named Tiru-

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<sup>26</sup> I.P. Meera Grimes, Harikathā, 2008, Pub. Indica Books, D 40/ 18 Godowlia, Varanasi-221001 (U.P.), pp.84 to 89.

Adhyayanotsavam.<sup>27</sup> This is particularly significant when students of dance, dance history and religious studies have a tendency to associate *Bhakti* / devotional poetry with the later poets like Jayadeva of the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

The stories associated with the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu must have been transformed into musical dance-drama for presentation. However it is around the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. that we find positive literary evidence indicating the existence of dance compositions based on Daśāvātāra theme. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. the great poet Jayadeva composed his immortal dramatic poem Gīta-Govinda. In the first *Sarga* of Gīta-Govinda we find an Aṣṭapadi dedicated to the ten incarnations of lord Viṣṇu. Jayadeva has described the incarnations of Viṣṇu/Keśva in ten stanzas, based on the *prabandha* format named Daśāvātāra Kīrtidhavalā. It is a well-known fact that Jayadeva composed this poem to be danced before Lord Jagannatha in the temple at Puri. The Daśāvātāra Aṣṭapadi appears at the beginning of the poem and appears to be a part of the *pūrvāṅga*. The tradition of presenting Daśāvātāra dance as a part of Gīta-Govinda dance-drama continued for centuries at the temple.

With the spread of Gīta-Govinda the Daśāvātāra Aṣṭapadi might have become quite popular in south India. It may be noted here that in the Pūrvāṅga of 'Kathakali' dance-drama of Kerala a song from Gīta-Govinda is sung. Scholars have found a manuscript of Gīta-Govinda with full instructions to the dancers in the Saraswati Mahal Library at Tanjavur (Gīta-Govinda with Abhinaya: Ed. K.Vasudeva Sastri). This rare manuscript is of unknown date (possibly 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E.).

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<sup>27</sup>A. Bharadwaj, Arayar Seva the Performing Art Prevailing in Temples, Journal of the Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Vol. VII, 2004-2005, A.I.R.I., G.D. Somani Memorial School Building, Cuff Parade, Mumbai-400005, .pp.109.

Although incomplete,<sup>28</sup> the manuscript is of immense value as a record of the techniques of interpreting the Gīta-Govinda in *abhinaya*.

Daśāvatāra Aṣṭapadi's popularity might have inspired some creative minds to start the tradition of Daśāvatārī plays. The Gīta-Govinda was written at the time when the epics had long been known and had deeply influenced religious activity. The major works of Sanskrit literature, of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa had already been created. Kśemendra had written his poem Daśāvatāra Carita. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. many major architectural and sculptural schools had been established. The Apabhraṁśa and Prakrit literary works had already begun to appear. Jayadeva's work crystallized in these new movements and in turn provided a leadership and example for others to follow. The tradition of singing of the Gīta-Govinda was introduced on a regular basis in the 17<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and still continues in the Guruvayūr Temple<sup>29</sup>.

Since music and dance are so closely interlinked, it is inconceivable that the poet- musicians were not conscious of the power of the poetic musical word in rendering it through dance. The Daśāvatāra was sung and danced in temple rituals in Orissa, in the temples of Rajasthan like Nāthadwara, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Assam and Manipur. It is not known when its singing began in Badrinath, but here too it is sung at the time of the Ārati.<sup>30</sup> Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda is an ideal written script which has unique formal technical qualities which could be freely adapted and interpreted in the other art forms also. This is an earliest literary evidence of presentation of the ten incarnations as a part of *pūrvaraṅga*.

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<sup>28</sup> Kapila Vatsyayan, Gita-Govinda and the Artistic traditions of India, The Journal of the Madras Music Academy Vol.XLV,(PTS. I-IV), pp.139

<sup>29</sup> Kapila Vatsyayan, Gita-Govinda and the Artistic traditions of India, The Journal of the Madras Music Academy Vol.XLV,(PTS. I-IV), pp.144

<sup>30</sup> Ibid- pp.139



It was Jayadeva's use of the *dvidhātu-prabandhas* which gave rise to the tradition of free verses in all parts of India. (The *Udgraha* and *Dhruva* become the *Pallavi* and *Carana* of South India).

The successors of Jayadeva began to use this particular style of treating the *prabandha*. The *Śabdāṅgas* of the *prabandhas* are the four main divisions of *Udgraha*, *Melāpaka*, *Dhruva* and *Ābhoga* – which are also called *Ārmbha*, *Ghat*, *Paricaya* and *Niṣpatti* respectively.<sup>31</sup>

The *prabandha* songs and devotional songs were deeply influenced by the structure of *Gīta-Govinda* and gave rise to the tradition of *Krishna Kīrtana* and the *Padavali Kīrtana*. Like the *Prabandha*, the *padavali kīrtana* contained all the *aṅgas*, like the *dhātu*, *tāla*, *rāga*, etc. An ancient dance-drama tradition might have been based on the format of the *prabandha* system. This term is used in literature, poetry, music and dance dramas to denote certain class of compositions, which comply with strict rules. In literature, music and dance, this format was followed up to the 18th century C.E. After Jayadeva, poets from all parts of India including the north, south, east and west began to compose devotional poetry which was set to a particular *rāga* and *tāla*.

Mahāraṇā Kumbha of Rajasthan (1433-1468 C.E.) composed special *prabandha-lakṣaṇa* for codifying the structural pattern of *Gīta-Govinda* in his *Rasikapriyā*. Thus we find that Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda* had the potential of influencing different poets and musicians on account of one central principle of handling the *prabandha* form in a manner which would provide greater fluidity, flexibility and improvisation than the earlier compositions of the same type. Kumbhakarṇa created a new form of *Sūḍa prabandhas* called *Miśrasūḍa prabandhas* (*Saṅgitarāja*, 2.4, 2.28 pp 553). He mentioned almost twenty-eight varieties of *Miśrasūḍa prabandhas* and the first is

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid-pp.142

named Daśāvatāra-Kīrtidhavaḷa. All these are adaptations of the Aṣṭapadis of Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda and are also treated by him in his Rasikapriyā commentary on Gīta-Govinda.

Lakṣaṇas of Daśāvatāra-Kīrtidhavaḷa (Miśrasūḍa-prabandha).

दशावतारकीर्तिधवलनामा

पदान्यष्टौ दशापि स्युरत्र स्वेच्छानुरोधतः ।

नानायति ग्रहलयतालरागोपबृंहिताः ॥

छायालगोपाधिवशात् शुध्दसादृश्यतोऽपि वा ।

अस्य सूडस्य मिश्रत्वमभाषिष्ट महीपतिः ॥

<sup>1</sup>छन्दसा येन केनापि गद्यैः पद्यैर्विनिर्मितः ।

ध्रुवः प्रतिपदं गेयः स एव हि विपश्चिता <sup>2</sup>॥

<sup>1</sup>Quotation in R.P. reads छन्दसा कीर्तिपूर्वेणधवलेन विनिर्मितः ।

<sup>2</sup> add विसर्ग ।

पदान्ताभोगरुचिरस्ततः पाटस्वराञ्चितः ।

दशावतारकीर्त्याद्यधवलोऽयं प्रबन्धराट् ॥

रागोऽत्र मध्यमादिः स्यादादितालो ,विलम्बितः ।

लयः ,स्यान्मागधी गीतिः श्रृङ्गारोऽत्ररसः स्मृतः ॥

कीर्त्तनं वासुदेवस्य विनियोगो नृपोत्सवे ॥

॥ इति दशावतारकीर्तिधवलनामा प्रबन्धः ॥

Kumbhakarna mentions that Miśrasūḍa is a combination of Chhāyāḷaga and Śudda varieties. It is not clear if both *sūdas* (songs) were of *deśī* (Regional traditions) origin and were already regarded as groups in their *deśī* environment or if only the name *sūḍa* is of *deśī* origin; for while 'ela' was composed in Sanskrit at that time in sophisticated metrical forms and figures of speech etc. the Sāḷaga *sūdas* must have been composed in Sanskrit before *sulādīs* were composed in Kannada by the Haridāsas (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century C.E.)<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Nartananirṇaya by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Edited by R. Sathyanarayana, Vol. II, First Pub. 1996, Pub. By Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi-110001.,PP. 311

Someśvara III in his *Mānasollāsa* or *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi* also defines *sūḍakarma* as consisting of larger *prabandhas* such as *elā*; he also seems to include ‘*tripadi*’, etc. among the *sūḍas*. *Daśāvatāra Gītī* in *Mānasollāsa* is of *Citrā* and *Vicitrā* varieties of ‘*tripadi*’. (We learn from *Mānasollāsa* (4.7.32 and 4.16.551) that the *tripadi* was sung as *Onakevādu* (an occupational folksong sung while pounding corn) and as *Aṅkamālā* (a song of irony containing a small number of touché taunt words directed at a rival defeated in battle or combat)<sup>33</sup>. The *lakṣaṇas* of *tripadi* can be compared with the *Daśāvatāra Gītī* in *Mānasollāsa*.

The *Sālagasūḍa prabandhas* were required to be composed in their namesake or other well defined *tālas* and to be performed in a predetermined sequence. That is why they were called *sūḍa-krama*. The groups of *dhruva* etc. were collectively known as *sūḍādi* or *sūlādi* since at least the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. in Kannada region<sup>34</sup>. King Tulaja has recorded in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. that the *sālagasūḍas*, now called *sūlādis*, were still in a flux of evolution. In North India they retained their names and structures and found application in different compositions dedicated to Viṣṇu.<sup>35</sup>

Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala in his *Nartana Nirṇaya* describes the *Sūḍa prabandhas* differently. They are related to *Sālagasūḍa vādyaprabandhas* (NN. Vol. I. pp. 82-85) and *yati prabandha* (NN Vol. I. pp. 86-91) which were performed in dance sequences. The *sālagasūḍas* were also *nṛtta prabandhas*, i.e. dance compositions. Catura Dāmodara has explained *sūḍādi nṛtyaprabandha* in his *Saṅgitadarpaṇam*,( 7.220-234) under the name ‘*śuddhapaddhati*’. Thus we learn that the *sūlādi-nṛtta* had a long line of traditional descent

<sup>33</sup> Nartananirṇaya by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Edited by R. Sathyanarayana, Vol.II, First Pub. 1996, Pub. By Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi-110001.,PP.351

<sup>34</sup> Ibid-PP.383

<sup>35</sup> Ibid-PP.388

(*sampradāya*) known to the early authorities. They were characterized by *nṛtya* according to the *bhāva* of the words rather than to composed dance or grammar of dance<sup>36</sup>.

At the time of Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala revolutionary changes were introduced and stabilized in the *sālagasūḍa prabandhas* by the Haridāsas of Karnataka in transforming them into *sūlādi*. It is Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala who conferred the status of Vādyaprabandha on *sūlādis* for the first time<sup>37</sup>. Later on they were renowned as dance compositions as well.

It is important to note that hereafter Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala also records the consent of practical exponents on *sūlādis*, viz. the Haridāsas of Karnataka such as Purandaradāsa and Vādirāja who were his contemporaries. Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala describes Prasiddha *prabandhas* such as Daśāvatāra *prabandha*, from contemporary musical practice. Perhaps the Daśāvatāra *prabandha* described by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala from contemporary music is a concession to contemporary Karnataka region. As Daśāvatāra was already composed by Jayadeva in his Gīta-Govinda and was a very popular example of Sūḍa *prabandha*, it can be regarded as an ancient origin and the *lakṣaṇas* of the Daśāvatāra *prabandha* by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala may be compared with his contemporary composers and songs of Haridāsas describing the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. We do not find this unique Daśāvatāra *prabandha* described elsewhere.

दशावतारः

विष्णोर्दशावताराणां प्रत्येकं यत्र वर्ण्यते ॥

सद्गुणं दशभिः खण्डैः षडङ्गैर्वाञ्छितक्रमैः ।

अन्त्यखण्डपदाभोगो अवतारो दशादिमः ॥ (NN Vol. II, pp. 124)

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid-PP.385

<sup>37</sup> Nartananirṇaya by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Edited by R. Sathyanarayana, Vol. I, First Pub. 1996, Pub. By Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi-110001., pp.217

In this *prabandha* each of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu as well as his excellent qualities are described in ten segments, set to six *aṅgas* in a random order, and the *ābhoga* is constituted in other words by the final segment. *Pada*, *pāṭa*, *biruda*, *svara* and *tenaka* can occur in any *avatāra*; *tāla* applies to the whole composition. *Ābhoga* is a separate segment composed in words other than *udgrāha*, *melāpaka* and *dhruva*. The tenth segment itself describes the tenth *avatāra* and excludes all *aṅgas* other than *pada*<sup>38</sup>. At the time of Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Daśāvatāra as a *prasiddha prabandha* had gained importance in religion and philosophy and also was a powerful subject for dance and music compositions.

Like the great composers of Carnatic music, Śankardeva (1449-1568C.E.), left behind a very large corpus of devotional compositions. The melodic and rhythmic structure set to these compositions led to the foundation of music and also to support the tradition of dance that evolved gradually as an independent genre of ritual art, while the literary support for it came from the texts of the devotional poetry of the saints. The Ankiya Nāṭ introduced by Śankardeva in the 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E. stands next to the great tradition of Sanskrit drama. In Bārgitas there are several intricately structured parts. These performance parts interestingly correspond to characteristic sections (*dhātus*) and other aspects (*aṅgas*) of Prabandhagitis as illustrated by Śarangadeva in Saṅgīt Ratnākara in constructing the image of a Prabandhapuruṣa. It is quite possible that Śankardeva coming in touch with the Prabandha tradition of music during his long pilgrimage was influenced or inspired by it, derived elements from the tradition to make the performance style of Bargits. Śankardeva included a Daśāvatāra song in his play ‘Keli Gopal Nātaka’, which is sometimes

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<sup>38</sup> Nartananirṇaya by Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Edited by R. Sathyanarayana, Vol.II, First Pub. 1996, Pub. By Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi-110001., pp. 389

danced as a separate solo item in the Sattriya style can be cited as evidence in this regard.

Likewise we find Daśāvatāra song in the play ‘Bhāma Kalāpam’ and also in the Kṛṣṇa līlā Tarangini in Kuchipudi style. But these efforts of presenting the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu on stage remained confined to the domain of solo dance presentation. The concept of incarnations of Viṣṇu, as we have seen earlier grew with time. We may give the credit of bringing Daśāvatāra concept into the fold of dance-drama to Jayadeva and certainly the credit of developing it into a full-fledged dramatic form goes to the people of western Maharashtra (Konkan) and Goa.

At the time of Rāmadāsa (1608-1681C.E.) there must have been a tradition of staging Daśāvatāra plays in Maharashtra. However in Dāsbodha, Samartha Rāmadāsa mentions Daśāvatāra plays and Harikathā also. Dāsbodha gives the Lakṣaṇa or theory of Harikathā and various applicative aspects of it but we do not find any elaborate description of the Daśāvatāra play. The tradition of bringing the actors in the guise of various characters while the Kīrtana was in progress was prevalent in Maharashtra in the 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Such dramatization was an important part of the Harikathā Kīrtana itself.

Originally Harikathā Kīrtana was performed by devotees mostly on Lord Viṣṇu and His various divine incarnations, especially the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa. The stories for narration were taken mainly from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Because the story was performed on Hari, the performance was called Harikathā. Later the stories of Śīva, Devi, Gaṇeśa, Murugā and other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, as well as stories of saints, were also performed in the form of Harikathā.

Harikathā Kīrtana is divided into two parts *purvāṅga* and *uttarāṅga*. In *purvāṅga* the performer takes up for discussion some metaphysical, religious or philosophical problem and in the *uttarāṅga* illustrates his hypothesis with some story. Kīrtankāra concludes the performance with Āarti. The tradition of bringing in actors in various disguises is not seen in the present day Kīrtana performances. All these semi-dramatic narrative performances have greatly contributed to the development of drama in Maharashtra, but we have lost the tradition of Nṛtya or the dance element which was prominent in the Harikathā presentation.

Saint Tukārama and Samartha Rāmadāsa laid the strong foundation for the development of the art form of *Harikathā*. Before the time of Samartha Rāmadāsa, spiritual story telling in Maharashtra was known as Kīrtana. It was saint Rāmadāsa who codified and gave a definite shape to Kīrtana and popularised it in the name of *Harikathā*<sup>39</sup>. Therefore it is not incorrect to say that *Harikathā* is an enhanced form of Kīrtana. Retaining the framework of Samartha Rāmadāsa, the art of *Harikathā* grew along with the local tradition and the creative acumen of the local artists in each State. As we know at the time of Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Daśāvātāra as a *prasiddha prabandha* had gained importance in religion and also was a powerful subject for dance and music compositions.

The Harikathā was first born in Maharashtra and brought to Tanjavur in the seventeenth century C.E. by disciples of Samartha Rāmadāsa, and then it spread all over South India<sup>40</sup>. During the period of Sarfoji II (1797-1832 C.E.), the *kīrtankāra* Meru Swāmi, also known as Anaṅta Padmanābha Swāmi, became a very popular *Harikathā* performer in Tanjavur. He made Harikathā popular in Kerala also by

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<sup>39</sup> I.P. Meera Grimes, *Harikathā*, 2008, Pub. Indica Books, D 40/ 18 Godowlia, Varanasi-221001 (U.P.), pp.14

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* pp.38

his visit to the court of Swāti Tirunal. Later in the period of King Śivājī II, Morkar or Morgaum Ramachandra Bua was the most popular Harikathā performer. The King gifted him a *maṭha* and requested him to train students in Kīrtana<sup>41</sup>. Harikathā attracted people and drew huge audiences.

It is important to note here that the service that the Marathi Kings of Tanjavur (1676-1855 C.E.) did for the fine arts of music, dance, drama and Harikathā, is immeasurable. The Maratha rulers of Tanjavur were not only great patrons of art and culture but they themselves were writers of outstanding merit. The second Maratha ruler of Tanjavur Śahaji Bhonsale (1682-1711C.E.) wrote many plays in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and Marathi. He was rightly known as Kavibhoja. It was during Śahaji's regime (1682-1711C.E.) that many Marathi saint poets from the north started the Bhajan and the art of Harikathā in the south.

In Śahaji's plays the Sūtradhāra calls himself Bhāgavat *daśāvatāri*, and the dance dramas were also called Daśāvatāra Bhāgavat or Harikathā. One of his plays 'Pancabhāṣāvilāsa' is written in five languages<sup>42</sup>. In this play Sūtradhāra sings a song in praise of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. This song is also inspired by the Daśāvatāra Aṣṭapadi of Jayadeva.

Pancabhāṣāvilāsa – Daśāvatāra song

एवं कन्या समूहमागत्य कालीयमर्दनं यदुवंशवर्धनं कालिन्दीतट्यनबिहारशीलं

वेणुनादलीलं का चनचेलं मदनगोपालं प्रणम्य प्राहुः ।

शृण्वन्तु सभासदः ।

कन्यकलचूर्णिका ॥

जयजय देवतासार्वभौम ।

जयजय नीलमेघश्याम ।

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.-pp.44

<sup>42</sup> Shende Sarojini: (1986), Marathi Natakaci Gangotri (Tanjavuri Marathi Sangeet Nataka), 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Maharashtra Government Press, Mumbai- 400032, PP. 209



जयजय करिवरप्रदायक ।  
जयजय अनंतकोटिब्रम्हाण्डनायक ।  
जयजय वेदोद्धारण-धृतमीनरूप ।  
जयजय चण्डप्रताप ।  
जयजय धराभारहरण-धृतकूर्मशरीर ।  
जयजय कारुण्यामृतसार ।  
जयजय वसुमतीसमुद्धरण  
कोडीकृतक्रीडावतार । निगमान्तविहार ।  
  
जयजय वसुमती हिरण्याक्षशिक्षणाय  
प्रहादरक्षणायाडगीकृतनरकेसरिवेष । नाशिताखिलदोष ।  
जयजय महाबलिगर्वान्माद निवारणाय  
  
वामनवटुकदेह । जयजय खगवाह ।  
जयजय धराभारसमुद्धारगाय-धृतधोरणपरशुहस्त ।  
निजदासानुपालन प्रशस्त  
जयजय दशमुखशिरः श्रेणि  
  
कन्दुकक्रीडासक्तोद्युक्त निजभुनदण्ड ।  
धृतकोदण्ड । पालिताजिलब्रम्हाण्ड ।  
जयजय रोहिणी वदनाम्बुजासव  
  
मधुधारापान जातरक्तान्तलोचन । भवभयमोचन ।  
जयजय निखिलचराचरसाक्षिभूतिदिगम्बर ।  
दुरितहर । बौद्धामिधान । अक्षयलक्ष्मीनिधान ।  
  
जयजय अखिलदुरालापपापपरिहरणाय कलितकत्क्यवतार ।  
जयजय त्रिजग सीमोहनाकार ।  
नन्दकुमार । नवनीतचोर ।  
गोपवस्तबीजार । गोवर्धनोद्धदार ।  
वृन्दावनविहार । गौरीसोदर ।  
श्रीराजगोपाल । सकलार्तिहर ।  
भक्तपाल । मां पाहि । मां पाहि ।

(As published in *Marathi Nāṭakāci Gangotri* by Sarojini Shende, 1983)

In his play 'Hariharavilās' the Sūtradhāra calls himself Bhāgavat-Daśāvatāri.<sup>43</sup> Kanchuki says, 'You fool, if you are alone, how can you be a Daśāvatāri?' Replying to his query Sūtradhāra states, 'Oh! Friend, I alone takes all the roles of the ten *avatārs*'. This is a reference to the tradition of presenting the Daśāvatāra by an actor in the *pūrvaraṅga* of the Vaiṣṇava plays.

This indicates that in the dance-dramas of Bhāgavatas many a time the Daśāvatāra presentation was included; at first the tradition might have started with the presentation of the Daśāvatāra song by the actor utilizing gestural language to underline its meaning in visual terms.

Marathi dance-musical plays were produced during the reign of Marāthā rulers at Tanjavur between (1682-1832 C.E.) and are preserved in the Saraswati Mahāl library at Tanjavur. From the Modi manuscripts which are available in the library we get the information about Bhāgavat-Mela troupes during Serfoji's reign (1798-1833C.E.). The Bhāgavat-Mela referred to in the Modi records was not limited to the repertoire performed in Melattur, Saliyamangalam and Tepperumanallur.<sup>44</sup> A vast number of Bhāgavat-Mela plays appear to have been enacted at the Tanjavur court. Although many of these exist in manuscript form, they do not survive in performance today. The Bhāgavata-melas were performed exclusively at Viṣṇu temples and were based on Vaiṣṇavite themes. Another point is that the teachers, the conductors and the artistes in Bhāgavat-Mela and Kuchipudi- that is, the Bhāgavatars and Bhāgavatulas, were all exclusively Brahmins. Venkatarāma Śāstrī (1743-1809 C.E.) composed many Bhāgavata

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<sup>43</sup> Yashavant Lele, *Marathi Rangabhumicha Itihas*, Khanda-I, Bhag-I, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1943, Pub. Prof. N.K. Gharpure, Chit., Abhinava Sharadopasak mandal, 812 Sadashiv Peth, Pune 2, pp.37.

<sup>44</sup> Davesh Soneji, *Unfinished Gestures: Devadasis, memory and modernity in South India*, 2012, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 60637, pp.243.

Mela Nāṭakas. His Nāṭakas has an influence of Sanskrit Nāṭaka tradition, Nāṭyaśāstra aesthetics and the development that have taken place to Nāṭaka format during the reign of Nāyaka and Maratha Kings. Introduction to Gaṇapati at the commencement of a *nāṭaka* follows the development to the theatre art brought by King Śahaji (1683-1712 C.E.) of the Bhonsala dynasty.

These points can convincingly prove that the tradition of Marathi dance- drama as we can name it, Daśāvatāra Bhāgavata, goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and its early beginnings are not to be found in Maharashtra. In the incorrect belief that these Marathi plays were limited to the royal court only, Vishnudas Bhave of Sangli, 19<sup>th</sup> century C.E. playwright, is taken to be the promoter of the Marathi drama among common people.

The saint-poets of Maharashtra have made many references to dramatic performances. Dñyāneśvara (13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) makes many references to various types of performing actors and dramatic forms in his works. In chapter 17<sup>th</sup> of Dñyāneśvarī he has graphically described a performance with generous offerings of money by the audiences. He has made a number of references to dance drama and also to puppet shows (1.120; 9.36, 37; 11.486, 487; 13.956; 15.422; 16.265.)<sup>45</sup> In one of his verses he says that by his skill of decorating himself by dress and make-up the actor did not get deceived. He also describes the narrative form Kīrtan as a kind of dance-drama or play-acting with dance movements- *natanāche*. Dñyāneśvara did not seem to have good opinion about dramatic art. However, in the present context his description of a dance-drama performance in chapter 17<sup>th</sup> is very important. Though the performance is not called Daśāvatāra it is clear that some kind of dance–drama shows did exist during Dñyāneśvara’s

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<sup>45</sup> Athavale Ananta Damodar : *Dñyāneśvarī*, published by Shri Rādhādāmodar Pratiṣṭhāna, Pune-30, 1994, third edition.

time. The existence of theatrical activity in Maharashtra is evident through many references to it in ancient Marathi poetry.

The Marathi saint-poet Rāmadās refers to Daśāvatārī plays in his Dāsabodha, He states: (Dasabodha 6.8.11)

खेळतां नेटके दशावतारी । तेथें येती सुंदर नारी ।  
नेत्र मोडिती कळाकुंसरी । परंतु अवघे धाटिंगण ॥

In the Daśāvatārī play beautiful girls come on the stage and enchant the audience with the charming movements of their eyes, but in reality they are all male actors.

दशावतारांतील कृष्णा । उपजे जीर्ण वस्त्रांची तृष्णा ।

In the Daśāvatārī play a person who is portraying Kṛṣṇa's character protects Draupadi by providing cloth to her, but after the play he himself begs for cloth.

From this we come to know that at the time of Rāmadās (16<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), there was a tradition of staging Daśāvatārī plays and female roles were done by male actors and also the condition and status of Daśāvatāra actors in the society. This is the only positive evidence indicating the existence of Daśāvatāra plays that we find in Dāsabodha.

Daśāvatāra is the most popular traditional theatre art form in Maharashtra. These ritual dance-dramas are held in most of the temples in western Maharashtra during festive occasions. The origins of Marathi theatre are traced to Daśāvatāra dance-drama tradition, which developed in the seventeenth century C.E. Scholars are divided into two groups as far as the origin of the dance-drama is concerned. One group believes it to have evolved from “Yakṣagāna” and “Bhāgavata-Mela” and many actors believe that Daśāvatāra is

originally a dance-drama form from western Maharashtra (Malvan, Sindhudurga). According to research scholars the form was introduced to the Konkan region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>46</sup> Generally the inherent actors, who are all male, belong to the Devali, Lingayat or Gurava caste groups and are known as Daśāvatārī players. It is believed that Shyamji Naik Kale, a Brahmin Kīrtankāra first staged Daśāvatārī play at Adivare village in 1728C.E. imitating Yakṣagāna. He also taught Daśāvatāra to some Tamasgirs, Lingayats and Guravas from Adivare village.

## Observations

We can conclusively say that Daśāvatāra dance-drama of Maharashtra has evolved during Bhakti movement. This historical record enables us to determine the period of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka tradition as flourishing in Maharashtra at least say from the seventeenth century C.E. In some parts of India the dance-drama tradition was shaped and nurtured by the Kīrtankāras. It was also a period when the *bhakti* cult spread to many parts of India, and the art of dance-drama became a vehicle for its expression. The Bhāgavata tradition was also responsible for the cultivation of a dramatic art of Maharashtra in which devotional stories were composed in the form of songs and set to music and were danced and interpreted in gestures by Brāhmaṇa devotees.

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<sup>46</sup> MarathiVishwakosha, Khanda-10 by Laxmanshastri Joshi, Maharashtra Rajya Marathi Vishwakosha Nirmiti Mandal, 1987, first edition, pp.1567

## CHAPTER- 6

### DAŚĀVATĀRA DANCE DRAMA OF MAHARASHTRA

#### 6.1 Introduction

In Indian mythology the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are collectively known as Daśāvatāra. They are Matsya (Fish), Kūrma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar), Narasiṃha (Man-Lion), Vāman (Dwarf), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki (Kalñkī). They form the base of Daśāvatāra dance-drama of Maharashtra.

The Daśāvatāra are among the first expressions of regional folk theatre in Maharashtra. In the course of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra spanning more than two centuries Daśāvatāra endured as a vibrant tradition of theatre that received sustenance as a religio-ritual form and as a healthy medium of popular entertainment from the people at large.

In the Daśāvatāra performance, the narrator (Sūtradhāra) first of all prays to Lord Gaṇeśa and Saraswati and invites them on the stage and then through them presents the various reincarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in their garb on the stage. The Daśāvatāra structure retains semblances of Sanskrit drama (*Prabandha*), the *pūrvāṅga* (prologue) and the *uttarāṅga* (epilogue).

Storytelling in Daśāvatāra is very precise and simple in language. Daśāvatāra performance thereby attracts audiences very quickly. Marked by exquisite artistry inlaid in its form and structure and stylized with subtle combination of music, dance and theatre, Daśāvatāra came to grow as a powerful theatre art and theatre movement in the years that followed.

Many people have contributed a lot in popularizing this traditional art form of Maharashtra like Valavalkar Maṇḍali, Nāik Mochemadkar, Mama Mochemadkar, Khanolkar, Achgaonkar, Alurkar, Chenvalkar-Gore, Chenvalkar and different members and artists like Rajabhau Ajgaonkar, Dhondi Mahankar, Gangaram Mistry, Satyavan Kandalgaokar, Baba Palav and many more. Some people believe that Valavalkar *gharāna* was the first one to popularise this art form. Shri. Vasant Sawant in his article<sup>1</sup> mentions that he had witnessed some Bhorpīs, who used to show the pictures of Fish, Tortoies, Varāha and Kalki or Kalñkī while performing Bhorapa during the year 1929-30 C.E. This clearly indicates that the concept of presenting *avatāra* of Viṣṇu through different art forms was popular in early twentieth century in Konkan region.

Tushar Naik Mochemadkar of the current generation is leading the way in making changes to this art without disturbing its unique structure and format. Babi Nalang, a noted actor of Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka, has won a prestigious Sangeet Nāṭaka Academy award from the government for his performance and contribution towards this traditional art form.

## 6.2 Background of Daśāvatāra

### 6.2.1 Region:

Konkan includes all the land that lies between the Western *Ghāts* and the Indian Ocean, from the latitude of Daman on the north to that of Terekhol, on the Goa frontier, on the south. The word Konkan is of Indian origin and of considerable antiquity, but its meaning as the name of a part of a country is not obvious and has never been satisfactorily explained, although various interpretations of it have

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<sup>1</sup> Sawant Vasanta : Dakṣiṇa Konkanaca Daśāvatāra, Nādabrahma, Ed. By Sarojini Babar, Published by Government Press, 1995, first edition, PP.144.

been given<sup>2</sup>. The district known under the name appears to have had very different limits at different periods. The seven Konkans of Hindu mythology are mentioned in a Hindu history of Kashmir, and are said by Professor H. H. Wilson to have included nearly the whole of the west coast of India. The word *Konkaṇā* indicates a strip of land along the western Indian coast beyond the *Sahyādrī* Mountains<sup>3</sup>. The people as well as the language they speak take the name from the region of their origin. The Konkani people primarily speak Konkani although very high percentage is bilingual. According to a mythological story, once the warrior-sage *Paraśurāma* threw his axe in the Arabian Sea and the sea withdrew to the point where the axe fell.



Lord *Paraśurāma* with *Sāraswat Brāhmaṇa* settlers commanded Lord *Varuna* to create the seas recede to make the *Konkan*.

*Daśāvātāra* is popular in major localities in *Sawantwadi*, *Kudal*, *Malvan*, *Vengurla*, *Kankavli* etc. in the *Sindhudurg* district of the *South Konkan Region* of *Maharashtra*. The villages of *Devgad tālukā* and *Dodamarg* also have annual performances of *Daśāvātāra*. Most of the villages in *Vengurla tālukā* (estate) such as *Walaval*, *Chendvan*, *Pat*, *Parule*, *Mhapan* have a rich tradition of *Daśāvātāra*. It is also popular in *North Goa* district in the *State of Goa*. It is mainly performed in *tālukas* such as *Pernem*, *Bardez*, *Bicholim* and *Sattari*.

<sup>2</sup> *Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha*, *Khanda II*, Published by *Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha Mandal*, (*Konkana*) *Pune-30*, 1970, first edition, PP.547-551

<sup>3</sup> As reported on <http://ratnagiri.nic.in/gazetter/gom/home.html>



## 6.2.2 Communities

Daśāvatāra is a folk theatre art form practiced by agriculturists or farmers in the Sindhudurg district of the South Konkan region of Maharashtra and the North Goa district of Goa. Daśāvatāra is today a popular form of drama in the rural areas. Initially it was popularized in the Konkan area by a Chitpavan Brahmin named Gore from Kavthe area in Sindhudurg and Shyamji Nāik Kale from Adivare in Ratnagiri district. Today it comes to be looked upon as an art of the commoners.

The diversity is reflected in origins, religion and geographical spread. The Konkani people can be divided into different categories based on their location and religion<sup>4</sup>. Among the major groups which have contributed to the tradition of Daśāvatāra drama of Hindu Konkans are the Chitpavan Brahmins, also known as Kokanashta Brahmins, along coastal Maharashtra. Many of them have contributed a lot to the development of a distinct Kokani-Marathi culture<sup>5</sup>. The Peshwas of the Maratha Empire also belonged to this community. Regardless of when they immigrated, they indisputably assimilated and spoke a dialect of Konkani called Chitpavani which is very similar to Malvani. Later on in the 17th and 18th century, they migrated to the *deśa* (the original Maharashtra) and adopted Marathi as their language. Out of 2000 Chitpavan families in 1700 C.E. it is estimated that 60 to 70 families had immigrated to Pune, Sangli, Satara, Solapur, Nashik and Nagpur. During 1600 c. C.E. to 1700 c. C.E. many Chitpavan families from Ratnagiri and Rajapur *tālukas* of the Ratnagiri district migrated to the

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<sup>4</sup> Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha, Khanda II,( Konkana), published by Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha , Pune-30, 1970, first edition, PP.551-552

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, PP.552

Karavalli coastal region of Karnataka<sup>6</sup>. They still speak the original Chitpavani dialect. Again, during 1818-1947C.E. many families migrated to Mumbai and Pune. The Chitpavan immigration into Maharashtra proper began when Balaji Vishvanath Bhat was made the Peshwa of the Maratha kingdom, replacing the earlier Pingle dynasty of Peshwas. It is interesting to note that not Chitpavani but Konkani, the language of the Southern part of the Sindhudurga district was introduced on the stage.

### 6.3 Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka performance traditions

All the forms of Vaiṣṇava drama are interrelated in the sense that they are regional variations of the country wide theatre movement inspired by the Bhāgavata *bhakti*.

#### 6.3.1 Daśāvatāraī Khele- Nāṭaka

In the realm of traditional genres the main performance as performed by persons of different communities. This Daśāvatāraī Nāṭaka is very peculiar to (*tal-konkan*) South Konkan region known as Daśāvatārā-Kālā or *jatṛā* performances. They are usually staged on *jatṛā* days, the season starting from Tripuri Paurṇimā, and continuing till the advent of rainy season<sup>7</sup>.

On Malvan side the members of *dahikālā/ dhaikālā* locally known as *Daśantris* generally belong to the *Devali* caste<sup>8</sup>. On Saṅgameśwara side such actors are known as *khele*<sup>9</sup> (**खेळे**). The performance starts at about 10 p.m. and it is conventional that it must terminate at day-break with the breaking of *handī*. (**हंडी** is a pot full of curds, milk, etc.)

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<sup>6</sup> Gazetteer of the Union Territory Goa, Daman and Diu: district gazetteer By Vithal Trimbak Gune, ,Published by Gazetteer Dept., Govt. of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, 1979

<sup>7</sup> As reported in [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people\\_entertainments.html](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people_entertainments.html)

<sup>8</sup> Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha- Khanda 4, published by Bharatiya Sanskriti Kosha Mandal, Pune-30, 1970, (Dashavatara).

<sup>9</sup> As reported in [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people\\_entertainments.html](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people_entertainments.html)

The stage is an improvised one, a simple *mandava* (booth) about 12' X 16 and 1 or 2' high enclosed on three sides by *jhamps* (plaited coconut-leaves) often serving the purpose, A bench or two at the back accommodates the *mṛdaṅga* and harmonium players and when required serves the purpose of 'throne' etc<sup>10</sup>. A curtain is held by two persons in front of the actor and is removed when the actor enters the stage. The Sūtradhāra of the play takes his stand at one corner of the stage. So, other actors also get enough space on the stage for entry and exit.

The programme begins with the entry song in praise of Gaṇapati. He is accompanied by Ṛddhi and Siddhi, his two consorts. They help him to hold his big trunk and the two extra hands. After this invocatory song goddess Saraswati enters the stage. She is the goddess of learning. Gaṇapati dances for a while in a criss-cross way with firm steps. He is offered worship in the *Namana* song and then after giving blessings he retires<sup>11</sup>. Then the character of the goddess Saraswati enters with the peacock as her carrier. She performs a 'peacock dance' and retires.

After this performance the demon Śaṅkhāsura enters on the stage dressed in a black cone-shaped mask. He is supposed to be a Brāhmaṇa by caste, and while enacting a Brāhmaṇic way of religious *karmas* creates much fun by his mimicries and mockeries.

Śaṅkhāsura meets his 'death' at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. The curtain is held and Śaṅkhāsura disappears; Kṛṣṇa performs a dance and retires this part is called *āḍadaśāvatāra*.

Now starts the main part of the Nāṭaka, the enacting of the main story that is *ākhyāna*. The theme is generally a *paurāṇic* subject such as Ushā-swapna, Draupadi-Vastraharaṇa, Kicakavadha, Kaurav-Pāṇḍav Yuddha, Droṇaparva, Abhimanyu etc.

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<sup>10</sup> As reported in [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people\\_entertainments.html](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people_entertainments.html)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

There is neither a script nor any specific *kathāvastu* or 'plot'. Every actor is acquainted with the 'story' and is allowed to deliver extempore 'dialogues' using his freedom with skill<sup>12</sup>. The *sūtradhāra* narrates and describes the parts which cannot be enacted on the stage but are important links of the story line. The play has to last till daybreak and the gaps in between the episodes are bridged over by interludes of songs and fights.

The fights have to be rigorously danced over the stage and the curtain is held for the 'dead' character to walk away from the stage. During the Malvani Daśāvātārī Nāṭaka one of the Ṛddhi and Siddhis moves in the audience with the *devāci-taḷi* or *ārati*, Individuals place their contribution in the dish and bow. The play concludes with the ceremony of breaking the *handi* at the hands of the village honourables<sup>13</sup>(*gāvkaris*).

The performance of this theatre form is not based on any written script (*samhitā*). These performances followed the oral tradition. They did not follow any modern theatre norms. So these theatre forms came under the shadow of traditional theatre without objecting to their original folk and ritual values.

In South Konkan there is a tradition of entertaining people by taking *sonḡa*. Generally on the occasion of Holi festival or *Śimgā*, the actors come in disguise and dance among the people. The actors take Daśāvātāra *sonḡa*, which is another tradition of performing Daśāvātāra. In this form only dance and music has importance in the presentation. Verities of dances are carried out while the procession is going on in the village. They use colourful masks and dresses.

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<sup>12</sup> As reported in [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people\\_entertainments.html](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/Gazetter/GOM/people_entertainments.html)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

According to some research scholars the Daśāvatārai drama was introduced to the Konkan region in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> From a historical point of view, these performances came into light during late 17<sup>th</sup> C.E. and early 18<sup>th</sup> C.E. It is believed that Shyamji Nāik Kale, a Chitpavan Brahmin (Śāṅḍilya gotrī) - Kirtankāra first staged Daśāvatār play at Ādivare village in 1728C.E. He brought this Daśāvatāra Nātaka from Karnataka. As mentioned earlier during 1600 to 1700C.E. many Chitpāvan families from Ratnāgiri and Rajāpur tālukas of the Ratnāgiri district migrated to the coastal region of Karnataka. C. K. Dixit in his book 'Ādivaryā Ci Mahākāli' mentions that Shyamji Nāik Kale promoted this art form and took it to urban society. He visited many places in Maharashtra with his troupe (*phaḍ*).

Strictly speaking, the origin and birth of this theatre form is unknown. Nevertheless, it got influence from Harikathā *kīrtana*. One can predict that it was Vaiṣṇavism that influenced the Daśāvatāra drama form during the 17<sup>th</sup> century along with other traditional theatre forms of India. Daśāvatārai drama as a form of literature has long been conspicuously unknown to the tradition of Marathi literature dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The influence of the *bhakti* movement resulted in a great religious following. Due to this the traditional performances like Daśāvatārī dance-drama developed out of Vaiṣṇava devotionalism and set deep roots in Maharashtra region. It stands, therefore, as a traditional theatre form of Maharashtra.

The information about the performance structure of Shyamji Nāik Kale's presentation is noteworthy. Here, the episodes connected with the major ten incarnations of Viṣṇu were presented elaborately as the name indicates. The two stock characters namely *sūtradhāra* and *viduṣka* of the Sanskrit theatre are also found in this form of traditional theatre. Haridāsa always played Sūtradhāra's role,

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<sup>14</sup> Joshi , Laxman Shastri , Marathi Vishwakosha, Maharashtra Rajya Marathi Vishwakosh Nirmiti Mandal ,1981, Khanda- 10, PP.1567

functioning as a narrator, as he recited and sung the narrative portions to link various dramatic episodes. He wore a long tunic, a cap and a waist band. He was supposed to stand in the centre accompanied by two *pakhwaja vādaka* on both the sides and a group of cymbal players or *ṭāḷkaries* would stand in a semi-circular formation behind them. The first item Maṅgalācaraṇa (an invocatory song) sung by sūtradhāra was always dedicated to Viṣṇu. After the opening prayer *mādhavi* (*mādhavya* or *viduṣka*) used to enter the stage. This was followed by *gopāla-nṛtya* after which the main story of Matsyāvatāra would start. Another typical character in this Daśāvatāra was *nāik*. Then the main part of the show that is Ākhyāna would start, in this generally all the ten *avatāra* were presented elaborately. In Ākhyāna multiple patterns of delivery were adopted. The prose dialogue was often an elaboration of the sung dialogue. In the Daśāvatāra dramatic structure the chorus; a group of singers used to play an important role.

There is a mention of the Daśāvatāra performance by *Guravs* of Kuveshi village in the Maharashtra Sahitya Patrika. This troupe from Kuveshi performed at Pune-Peshawa *Darbar* in 1896-97 C.E. (Shaka 1818-19)<sup>15</sup>. The text also mentions the contribution of Chitpavan Brahmins to the Daśāvatāra drama. The Patrika contains the only published script of the Daśāvatāra drama (*smhitā*) available today which was published in 1933.

The script contains the description of six *avatāras* (Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Rāma and Paraśurāma). There is no information regarding Daśāvatāra music and *tāla-vādyas*. The description found in this text has only literary pertinence. It contains many musical forms such as *Ovi*, *Āryā*, *Pada*, *Curṇika*, *Śloka*, *Pālṇā*, *Tarāṇā* and the languages used are Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindi. There is a mention of Rāhu Nṛtya and Apsarā Nṛtya and also some interesting fight

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<sup>15</sup> Patankar R.K.: Daśāvatāra, Maharashtra sahitya patrika, Pune, Year 6, March 1933, aṅka 1, PP.35-42.

sequences in the script. The tradition of presenting *avatāras* of Viṣṇu can be observed only in this tradition. According to Śrī. Ramachandra Joshi, who is now settled in Pune, the tradition was followed by the troupe of Kuveshi village in Sindhudurga district. Śrī. Joshi with his brother Shri. Suresh Joshi from Kuveshi, took the efforts to preserve the tradition by documenting some episodes (*Pūrvaraṅga*, *Nāndi*, *Matsya avatāra*, *Narasimha avatāra*, *Paraśurāma avatāra* and *Rāma avatāra*) of this Daśāvatārī Saṅgīta Nāṭaka (Video 4).

Shri. Ramachandra Joshi said that the Daśāvatārī Saṅgīta Nāṭaka of Kuveshi has a very interesting background. He also narrated the story, how this Daśāvatāra came to their village. He confirmed that the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka tradition which they follow is the same tradition of Adivare village, which was composed by a Brahmin *kīrtankāra* Shri. Shyamji Naik Kale.

#### **Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka presented in the Temple at Kuveshi-**

##### **Timings of the Plays**

Usually the performances are nightlong affairs often spreading over more than one night.

##### **Stage furniture**

A chair or two or a seat/ stool is used as an only one piece of furniture. The seat can suggest different locales like an upper storey, a tree, a garden, a palace or a mountain top by the *abhinaya* of the actor assuming different postures on it.

##### **The performance preliminaries-**

Prior to the main performance there are long preliminary rituals which are sanctioned by the temple authorities and last for long time. The preliminaries on the stage begin with the playing of percussion

instrument. The Sūtradhāra recites the śloka. The chant-like songs and ślokas are sung which refer to different gods and Sarasvati.

“सूत्रधार ॥ शांताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं ॥  
विश्वाधारं गगनसदृशं मेघवर्णं शुभांगं ॥  
लक्ष्मीकांतं कमलनयनं योगिभिर्ध्यानगम्यं ॥  
वंदे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथं ॥१॥  
या कुन्देन्दुतुषारहारधवला या शुभ्रवस्त्रान्विता ॥  
या वीणावरदंडमंडितकरा या श्वेतपद्मासना ॥  
या ब्रह्माच्युतशंकरप्रभृतिभिर्देवैः सदा वंदिता ॥  
सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निःशेषजाड्या पहा ॥२॥  
मूकं करोति वाचालं पंगुं लंघयते गिरीनह ॥  
यत्कृपा तमहं वंदे परमानन्दमाधवं ॥३॥  
समचरणसरोजं सांद्रनीलांबुदाभ ॥.....”

### **Make-up**

The material of the body paint constitute the paste colours made up from locally available material.

Red – from red earth

White – from lime paste, rice past and saṅgajirā

Yellow – turmeric and yellow earth

Black – from cal powder or *kājala*

Blue – from indigo

Red – *sindūra* or kumkum

Orange – *śendura*

Glitter – from mica powder

### **Ornaments**

Ornaments are made from wood and covered by mica and coloured paper. They are made by the traditional carpenters.

### **Entries**

The main character emerges from behind the curtain accompanied by an introductory verse. General entries are made from the left door of the stage



with exits through the right door. Characters like Rāvaṇa enter from the back of the audience accompanied by torches and shrill cries.

“थैय दैई दधाधि जाधिला गधा ॥ नारायणके नमो नमो जय नारायणकी नमो नमो ॥

थया ताथेता थया ताथे ॥

मेघैर्मेदुरमंबरं वनभुवः श्यामास्तमालद्रुमैर्नत्त्कं

भीरूरयं त्वमेव तदिमं राधे गृहं प्रापय ॥

इत्थं नन्दनिदेशतश्चलितयोः प्रत्यध्वकुंजद्रुमं ।

राधामाधवयोर्जयंति यमुनाकूले रहः केलयः ॥

आधी देवसखा नागमपूजित सडमृगसारिराधा नमो नमो ॥ थया ताथ .॥

नारायणके नमो है ॥ चिंतामणि नमो नमो ॥

केशवमाधवमुकुंदमुरारे दशरथनंदन देवारे ॥ थैया ता ॥ (माधवी येतो). भलि

भलि भाजन गोपीजनरंजन सहमृगरारिराधा नमो नमो ॥ थया॥

(माधवी बोलतो) आहो ॥ (सूत्रधार) बहले ॥

(मा.) प्रथम आरंभ जाहले ॥ आता कोण यावे हो ॥

(सूत्र.) गोपाळ यावे ॥

(मा.) कैसे प्रकारचे ॥

राधामुग्धमुखारविंदमधुपस्त्रैलोक्यमौलिस्थली

नेपथ्योचितनीलरत्नमवनीभारावतारक्षमः ॥....”

There is no attempt at realism in the presentation of Daśāvātārī Nāṭaka nor is there an endeavour to adhere to the written script in its linear or narrative pattern. The scenes of the plays are performed by four or five performers. Each evening's performance is devoted to the presentation of

one specific *avatāra*. The performance ends with the presentation of Rāma *avatāra*.

This information leads us to a simple conclusion that Daśāvatāra drama was also performed by Brāhmins and Lingāyats, during the temple festivals at Kuveshi village. It should be noted that in the course of time many became oblivious of the tradition of Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka and also about the contribution of the Chitpavan Brahmins towards the development of the Daśāvatāra Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

At the time of Rāmadāsa (1608-1681C.E.) there was a tradition of staging Daśāvatāra plays but there is no positive evidence of any presentation of Daśāvatāra Bhāgavata. However in Dāsbodha, Samartha Rāmadāsa mentions Harikathā and Daśāvatāra separately. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E., the Marathi Harikathā was introduced in Tanjavur. During its peak period Harikathā became a popular medium of entertainment, and helped in transmitting cultural, educational and religious values and had a powerful impact on various folk and traditional performing arts. The Tanjavur Maratha Kings themselves were not only great lovers of various arts like music, dance and literature but they themselves contributed significantly to these various fields. Their own contribution specifically to the dramatic genre is noteworthy. The second Maratha ruler of Tanjavur, Śahaji (1682-1711C.E.) wrote many plays in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and Marathi. Śahaji composed several *nātakas* and *prabandhas*. In his *prabandhas* many Darus and Padas appear and each composition has specific Rāga and tāla pattern. His Daśāvatāra Bhāgavata compositions include *curnikās*, *darus*, *padas* and *śuṣkākṣaras*. In his compositions of Darus, he has employed different kinds of *darus* like *praveśa daru* and *swāgata daru* etc. found as ‘*dhruva*’ in Bharata’s Nāṭyaśāstra. It is also interesting to note that the setting of *daru* is similar to Kīrtana. It is usually set in *madhyama kāla* and *cāpu tāla*. In his plays the

*Sūtradhāra* calls himself Bhāgavata *daśāvatārī*, and the dance dramas were also called Daśāvatāra Bhāgavata or Harikathā<sup>16</sup>. These plays were not the Yakṣagāna type, borrowed from the South, in which the story is unfolded through dancing and singing. The dancing part was done by different characters in the play and singing part by the *Sūtradhāra*, who conducted the play and remained throughout on the stage. These dramas were composed and staged according to the tenets of the drama as set forth by Bharata, Their themes were mainly from mythology and they used to be staged during different festivals. Daśāvatāra Bhāgavata dance-musical plays were produced during the reign of Maratha rulers at Tanjavur between (1682-1832 C.E.) and are preserved in the Saraswati Mahal library at Tanjavur. So these facts can convincingly prove that the tradition of Daśāvatāra Bhāgavat goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its early beginnings are to be found outside Maharashtra, in south India.

After 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E. the changes were observed in the style of dance compositions, theatre and in the presentations of dance-drama. Drama and the spoken word was further developed and refined. Daśāvatāra saw major changes in performance structure and organisation. Changes occurred in the stage equipments like electrical lights which replaced the 'Petromax' lamps. Changes occurred in seating arrangements. Major changes came in the themes, with the inclusion of folk epics, Sanskrit dramas and created (imaginary) stories also became the thematic base of Malvani Daśāvatāra presentations. Konkani, the language of the Southern part of the Sindhudurga district was introduced on the stage. This gained great popularity in the Sindhudurga region. All these new trends continued with added vigour after 1970s, with a new element of influence. The Malvani style of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka started making a big impact on other performing art styles. This trend continues even today.

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<sup>16</sup> Lele Yashavant, Marathi Rangabhumicha Itihas, Khanda- I, Part-I, Publisher-GharpureN.K., Sadashivpeth , Pune-2, 1943, PP.83.

Dr. Prakash Khandge has discussed the topics related to Vidhināṭya and Bhaktināṭya<sup>17</sup> of Maharashtra in his book. He has taken efforts to throw some new light on the traditional knowledge of rules and regulations related to practices of Daśāvātāra dance-drama. In his book, while narrating the regional variations, he mentions some interesting traditional dance sequences of the Daśāvātāra dance-drama.

Basavā Nṛtya is the first invocatory dance item dedicated to Śiva and Pārvati. It is performed with the umbrella which is made of bamboo and leaves and the symbols of Śiva and Pārvati. Mask of Nandi is also used in this dance.

Dwārpāl Nṛtya- After the invocation of Śiva and Pārvati this dance is performed by two Dwārpāl characters.

Dance of Gaṇapati and Ṛddhi-Siddhi- Gaṇapati is accompanied by Ṛiddhi-Siddhis. He dances for a while in a zigzag way with shuffling steps.

Peacock dance of Saraswati- The character of the goddess Saraswati enters with the wooden peacock as her carrier. She performs a 'Peacock dance'. While dancing she uses Abhaya Hasta and Hamsāsya Hasta.

Dances depicting battle- While depicting the fighting scene the characters move in a circular manner. They also maintain *pratyālidha* position.

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<sup>17</sup> Prakash Khandge, Vidhināṭya-Bhaktināṭya Bhaṇḍār-Bukā, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2012, Publisher: Maitreya prakashan, Vile-Parle (east), Mumbai-57. PP. 140.

## 6.4 Present-day performance structure of Daśāvatāra in Maharashtra

### 6.4.1 Performance of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka

Daśāvatāra is believed to have evolved from theatre during Bhakti movement. The structure of Daśāvatāra, which retains some features of Sanskrit theatre, consists of two parts such as *purva-raṅga* i.e. prologue and *uttara-raṅga* i.e. the latter performance. The principal aspect of Daśāvatārī dance-drama is to create faith or Bhakti among people and this aspect is still predominant in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭakas.

- The Daśāvatāra performance takes place at night on any temporary open stage.
- The Sūtradhāra plays *cakvā* a type of cymbals in front of a small curtain with his orchestra of musicians playing Harmonium, Pakhwaja/Mṛdaṅga.
- The troupe worships its deities and masks before beginning.
- The play opens with a song in praise of Gaṇapati and Saraswati, both impersonated by actors.
- A priest enters the stage and performs *pūja*; the dialogues between him and the Sūtradhāra are usually comic. Different troupes follow different conventions. They do not use any written texts.
- The sūtradhāra, known as Nāik or Haridāsa, sings invocatory, ārti or ślokas. After this benedictory scene, Śārada or Saraswati and Gaṇapati exit with stylized dancing steps. The *purva-raṅga* songs allude to local deities, praise patrons and sometimes preach morals as well.
- The *uttara-raṅga* deals first with the mythological comic episode of killing the demon Śaṅkhāsura. He steals the Vedas from Brahmā and Viṣṇu after killing the demon recovers them. Haridāsa introduces Śaṅkhāsura, dressed in black with a black

mask, in rustic style. Śaṅkhāsura of Daśāvatāra is the villain and the jester combined in one. The fights between Śaṅkhāsura and Viṣṇu's Matsya *avatāra* provide great entertainment. This episode also satirizes contemporary socio-political life.

- The farcical scenes are performed in stylized form (*Nāṭyadharmi*).
- The play proper (*Ākhyāna*) presents an instructive dramatization of an *avatāra* story.
- Buddha and Kalki incarnations are not shown on the stage.
- Actors impersonating Paraśurāma, Kūrma and Varāha do appear on the stage.
- Dramatized episodes from Narasiṃha, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa incarnations occupy an important position in the Daśāvatāra play.
- The show ends with a song at dawn. Some performances conclude with references to their incarnations and even to artistes.
- The Daśāvatāra always has a happy ending which is a unique feature of Daśāvatāra dance-drama.

These plays are normally loud, and the actors usually shout out their dialogues. No performance is complete without a dramatic battle scene. Many popular mythological stories from the Purāṇas, Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa are performed. The audience is more appreciative of the stories like the Abhimanyu Vadha, Droṇaparva, Hiḍimbā and Bhīma which show the predominance of *ārabhati* and *bhārati vṛtti*. A normal stage or temple performance hardly uses any sets or props; most of the time only a single wooden bench is kept in the middle of the stage.

## 6.4.2 Costumes and Make-up

In the earlier days, the actors in the play would carry their metal boxes containing their costumes and make-up and walk to the next village for a next performance. The Daśāvatāri artists get their own costumes and do their own make-up. Every actor has his own metal box in which all the necessary make-up and costumes are kept. Once instructions are received from the director about which role a particular actor has to perform, the actor prepares accordingly for the presentation. Here it is not possible to describe the details of costumes and make-up within a limited space. But certain general features are noteworthy:

Noticeably the Daśāvatāra make-up is usually loud and clothes that shine and attractive patterns are preferred. It is decidedly rich, graceful and more closely related to the ornamentation found in Indian sculpture. The costumes in Daśāvatāra depend on the characters depicted in the drama. The chief male characters, like Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu with other characters belonging to the sublime type called *Mahā-puruṣa*, have a special type of make-up and head-dress which is prepared specially for that particular character. These characters also have a specific *tilaka*, (spiritual mark on forehead). The *prati-nāyaka* or the villain, *Rākṣasa* appear in the weirdest dress and generally black, green or white colours are used in the costume. All the characters wear *pitāmbar* or *dhotar*. The dresses are mostly in bright colours, with a lot of dazzling lace all over. The make-up includes masks also. The costume of Nārada is very much like a Ṛṣi. Traditionally, males play female roles in Daśāvatāra. However, more recently female artistes are seen to have performed in both male and female roles. The women characters wear *nauwārī sādī* ‘नऊ वारी साडी’ with traditional Maharaṣṭrian jewellery. Daśāvatāra ornaments are made out of light wood, mirror work and coloured stones. Though, lighter materials like thermocol are used in modern days, ornaments are still predominantly woodwork. The faces of kings have a rosy pink

paint, the villain or the *Rākṣasa* appears with the green or black colour, and Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, blue. Daśāvatāra artists make use of easily available material for the facial make-up. They use *geru*, *cunā*, *kolsā*, *kunku*, *śendūr*, *kājal*, *Ālatā*, *pivadi*, *kāva*, *hingud*, and powder etc. to make a paste of different colours with coconut oil. This mixture acts like a waterproof base for the make-up. Characters in the mythological plays like Daśāvatāra being of common origin, the descriptions in the Purāṇas and the epics are the basis for dress and decoration.

### **6.4.3 The tradition of music related to Daśāvatāra**

The success of the Daśāvatāra culture lies in the fact that in handling the music they have been able to keep the objectives intact although the applications differ. It has been mentioned earlier that in Daśāvatāra, the music element is regarded as a parallel to Harikathā kīrtana. The tāla pattern of the songs used in the Daśāvatāra and kīrtana are almost the same. A web of tālas is created by moving from one tāla pattern to another quite spontaneously. Bhajani *ṭhekā*, *ardhā tintāla* and Dhumali, Langar, Ārati and Gaulaṇa are the main tālas generally used in three speeds (*vilambit*, *madhya* and *druta*). The words (*śuṣkāḥśras*) like ‘He jitām tā thai yā thā’ is used as a *toda* (the end point). Only three musicians accompany the show, a Harmonium player, Tabalā or Mṛdaṅga player and the Zānja or cymbal player. The musicians sit on the stage and many times they also participate in the performance.

The information of different performing troupes is summarised shortly in the table (6.4.4). The interviews covered not only the questions for information but also several inquiries about interpretation and corroboration. The interviews have been audio recorded.

### **TABLE - 6.4.4. Features of Daśāvatāra plays (See App. D)**



### 6.4.5 General Observations

It was obvious that a Daśāvatāra play is in its element among the unsophisticated audience for whom it is performed, for rural audience can simply enjoy the performance. It is primarily a play of speech and song. The temple theatre is in use only in a few regions. Temporary theatre halls (made of bamboo and wood or of tent-cloth) near temples are, however, a common feature all over the Konkan region. Theatres or places of performance in or near the premises of temples are used for plays directly related to the deity or religion. Secondly, when the temple is directly responsible for the maintenance of the theatre; their patronage is neither extensive nor regulatory.

There are three distinct patterns of performance tradition.

- 1] Soṅgī Daśāvatāra- the street performances on Holī/ Śimgā.
- 2] Daśāvatārī Kheḷe/*dhaikāla* performances- the victory performance or a show for an amusement on special occasion or Jatrā.
- 3] Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka - the temple performance on special occasions and religious festivals.

A performance of Daśāvatārī Kheḷe or *dhaikāla* performance usually depicts a story from the Hindu epics and purāṇas. It consists of a narrator (*sūtradhāra* and *nāika*) who either narrates the story or sings pre-composed dialogues, backed by musicians playing on traditional musical instruments. All the components of Daśāvatāra, dance, dialogue and music are improvised. Depending on the ability and skills of the actors, variation in dance and amount of dialogue may change in the presentation. It is not uncommon for actors to get into philosophical debates or arguments without going out of the framework of the character being enacted.

Daśāvatāra is a traditional theatre form combining dance, music, actor-created dialogues, costumes and make-up and also stage technique with a distinct style. It is closely connected with other forms prevailing in other parts of Maharashtra and its neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu. According to noted theatre artist and scholar Dr. Tulasi Behere, Daśāvatāra is a unique traditional form of Maharashtra and cannot be compared with any other drama forms like Yakṣagāna or even the Kīrtana format. Shri. Rajendra Hardikar (Daśāvatāra actor, working since 1972) from Adivare village opines that the musical part in Daśāvatāra has influence of Rāgadāri *saṅgīta*. The performance used to have Nāndi Ślokas like “*Aṁbe tujalā vadati sakalahi, saṅkaṭa naśini śrī mahākālī*”. Śrī. Suresh Joshi a *Brahmin* from Kuveshi village adds that the tradition of performing Daśāvatāra in Rāmeśwar temple in Kuveshi is from 80 to 90 years old. This performance is totally different from a Malvani Daśāvatāra pattern. The traditional temple performance of Kuveshi village has presentation of different *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. It starts with the presentation of Matsyāvatāra and the last presentation is of Rāmāvatāra. Every year on the occasion of Kartiki Paurṇima celebrations the Daśāvatāra is performed by Lingāyats of the village. This tradition of Daśāvatāra presentation is also followed in nearby villages. This defiantly shows that there must have been a practice of staging Daśāvatāra in the temples of Maharashtra. And the techniques of presentation of these dramas were more close to the Bhāgavata Kīrtana style. The scripts which these people follow are not published.

The Daśāvatāra traditional theatre form of Konkan and Goa region is already nominated for the UNESCO’s representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India in the Year 2010. UNESCO’s recognition of Daśāvatāra theatre form will be helpful in enhancing its cultural importance.

But, the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka, defies neat classification into categories like traditional, classical and folk. It can be included into each of these, or all of them together, depending upon our line of approach. And hence it exhibits many types and varieties inside itself.

However, Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka can be rightly called a traditional form and a visual living tradition of the Daśāvatāra in Indian culture. My research experience in this field makes me firmly believe that this distinguished age-old traditional theatre form of Maharashtra deserves recognition for its continued preservation and rejuvenation.

### **6.5 Elements of the Nāṭyaśāstrīc Traditions in Daśāvatāra**

Nāṭyaśāstrīc aesthetics can be used in which Daśāvatār dance drāma can be moulded for the future presentation to avoid irrelevant repetitions which were prosaically passed off as tradition. However, it is not our purpose here to go into greater detail of the parallelism of the performance technique of the Daśāvatārī dance-drama and the Nāṭyaśāstrīc principles. Practically each section of the drama can be analyzed in terms of the Āṅgika, Vācika, Āhārya and Sātvika *abhinaya*. Consequently it is necessary to restrict our field of analysis.

The Daśāvatārī dance-drama draws upon the distinct technique of its own. The structural format and the dramatic propriety of this drama form are within the compass of Indian dance and dramaturgy, specifically as detailed in Nāṭyaśāstra. The language used in Daśāvatārī dance-drama is Konkani, Marathi and Hindi. It is used in speeches of actors, while Sanskrit is employed in benediction, prologue etc.

As is recognized, the colour scheme in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka was thoroughly conventionalised and governed by the patterns of scenic make-up which evolved in the long progress of the theatre. Artists also owed the lines and shades of colour which produced the three-

dimensional effect to patterns in which actor's bodies were toned. This is also mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra by the term *vartanā*, body make-up. In the Nāṭyaśāstra, the term *vartanā* means the direct application of the colours or paints to the rounded surface of the human limbs. This borrowing of the techniques and terms from dancing perfectly agreed with the Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa.

A notable feature of Daśāvatāra is to entice and give aesthetic enjoyment to the people of different strata of society. The details of the variegated dance numbers and the technique and repertoire of this dance-drama tradition need to be understood.

Though there is a considerable portion of prose in Daśāvatāra, like Yakṣgāna, it is to be delivered in a drawl and chanting tone, which is a special feature of the Malvaṇī dialect. The drama is mainly choreographed for temple performance. That is why generally the temple premises are used as a stage which is without backdrop, scenery, setting and permanent a curtain.

According to Bharata, the night time part of the Pūrvaraṅga ceremony included worship of musical instruments and prelude to the *pūjā* in honour of Indra's flag staff. "After all gods and musical instruments have been worshiped, a *pūjā* in honour of *jarjara* shall be performed for the acquisition of grand success for the *nāṭya*." (NS.3.11)

Nāṭyaśāstra Chapter II and III describe in great the pre-performance preliminaries. Nāṭaka-Lakṣaṇa-Ratna-Kośa (of Sāgaranandin) alone has mentioned *jarjarastuti* and *dig-vandanā*, which in the Bharata's Pūrvaraṅga were important performances in the Sūtradhāra's *parivarta*. According to the Sāhityadarpaṇa, the Pūrvaraṅga includes the rituals which the actor performs before the play to remove all hindrances.

According to the Nāṭyaśāstra the Pūrvaraṅga part performed before the audience includes some episodes connected to the worship. The elaborate Pūrvaraṅga, which Bharata described and recommended, came to be

curtailed in the course of time, may be because the drama developed on the literary side or perhaps these preliminary items of entertainment proved to be time-consuming. The curtailment and transformation of the old Pūrvaraṅga are evident in subsequent theory and practice of dramatic art.

(e.g. The prologues of the extant classical dramas show only *nāndī*, *kavināmasaṅkīrtana*, *praśasti*, *prarochanā* etc.)

Some of the present-day traditional theatre forms exhibit distinct similarities of performance. Pūrvaraṅga or the preliminaries of a play is still an important chapter in any Indian traditional theatre.

A few representative temple performances from different places of Konkan region have been analyzed to find out the common features in the frame-work of their *pūrvaraṅga* part. Some of the actions performed by these actors can be equated with or even be regarded as identical to the items of *pūrvaraṅga vidhī* as described in NŚ. We can say that it is based on 'Loka-Pramaṇa' means without the knowledge of Śāstrika *pūrvaraṅga*. *pūrvaraṅga vidhīs*, together with several other activities in the temple are spontaneously being performed which shows a continuity of the 'Śuddha *pūrvaraṅga*' mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra.

It is interesting to observe that before the presentation of the Daśāvataṛī Nāṭaka the idol or the mask of the temple deity is taken out in a procession led by a band of musicians, singers and dancers in which the *pālakhī* was adorned with jingling bells and garlands. The umbrella and the flag-staff are also carried in this procession. Finally, the idol is installed in the *sabha maṇḍapa* of the temple. (Video - 4)

So, the elaborate *pūrvaraṅga* prescribed by Bharata was partly a musical and dance performance but it also contained formal worship offered to the deities of the stage and theatre. The *pūrvaraṅga*, which Bharata recommended came to be curtailed in the course of time. It was greatly

shortened by its inclusion as a component part of the traditional Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka, but its principal parts, including dancing, singing and instrumental music were preserved. We can still observe this in the preliminaries of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka, temple performance.

The history of the stage-costume, make-up and props collectively called the *Āhārya abhinaya* begins with Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. Bharata's *āhārya* includes costumes, ornaments, crowns and head-gears, make-up, masks, wigs, props of different types and model work and also the techniques employed in making them and the pigments and their proportionate mixing to obtain secondary and tertiary colors. This has been discussed earlier in the second chapter of the thesis. We might discover certain basic principles in the Nāṭyaśāstra which were to remain valid for all times to come. There is a sense of universality in his approach, therefore, he does not describe any specific mode of wearing the costume, nor does he describe any piece of garment worn in his time. Bharata has not even mentioned the settings and lighting color media, though he deals with the Nāṭyamaṇḍapa in great detail. According to Bharata three basic principles seem to determine the style of *āhārya*. They are the *rasa*, the *dharmī* and the *pravṛttī*. There is a scope to study and find out the similarities or otherwise the differences of the principles in the Nāṭyaśāstra and the presentation of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka.

In technique, Daśāvatāra follows *nṛtta*, *nṛtya* and *nāṭya*. Of course, *nāṭya* is the soul of this art form, the primary object of which is to generate the final realisation of *rasa* in its transcendental state. But regards the concept of the *rasa* theory, the Daśāvatārī drama has some peculiarities of its own. *Bhakti*, which is not recognised as a distinct *rasa* in any ancient treatise on aesthetics, is regarded here as the main *rasa*. No other strong emotion or sentiment is allowed to linger for long.

Nṛtta has little bearing in the thematic content of the Daśāvātāra, but is indispensable and adds to the aesthetic beauty of the performance. The dance numbers which come within the parameter of this dance-drama system may be categorized as-

- Dance of Gaṇapati and Ṛddhi and Siddhi
- Peacock dance of Saraswati
- The short dance pieces of other characters like Hanumān.
- Dances depicting battle scenes.

In these Nṛtta numbers, right from the footstep up to the movements of various parts of the body, everything is stylized. The use of patterned foot-work woven with particular *tāla* pattern, decorative hand gestures, gaits, *utplavanas* (jumps) are some characteristic elements of this *nṛtta* part. The important characteristic feature of the Hanumān dance is the use of jumps, lifting both the feet together and dancing in *druta-laya* (fast tempo).

Nṛtya is the interpretative dance through gesture language. In Daśāvātāra drama a series of gestural languages are employed appropriately. These elements of gesture language are drawn from the principles of Nāṭyaśāstra.

Nāṭya, the composite of music, dance and speech is the soul of Daśāvātāra dance-drama. The technique of this drama is governed by three distinct principles, *dharmi* (mode), *vritti* (style) and *abhinaya* (acting) which are the same principles that govern the technique of Indian classical drama as delineated in the Nāṭyaśāstra. As far as the mode of presentation is concerned, the *nāṭyadharmi* or artistic stylization is adhered to in this dance-drama style. Right from the make-up, acting as well as pronouncing of words to shedding of tears, everything is stylized. All the four *vṛttis*, prescribed by Bharata, such as, *kaiśiki* (graceful), *sātvati* (grand), *ārabhati* (energetic) and *bhārati* (verbal) are applied here and one may feel the dominance of *ārabhati*

and *bhārati* in the Daśāvatāra dance-drama. *Āṅgika*, *Vācika*, *Āhārya* and *Sātvika*, all the four types of *abhinaya* of Indian dance and dramaturgy, are indispensable in this dance-drama.

Application of Nāṭyaśāstra elements with more classical and neat technicality can bring about certain artistic changes and can highlight its unique aesthetic sensibility to the present-day practice of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka.

## Observations

The background of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra has hitherto not been researched intensively to my knowledge although several articles are available. These give only an outline or fragmentary information. This thesis is therefore based on the findings of my field research in addition to the available written sources.

From the above findings, I am convinced that the traditional style of Daśāvatārī dance-drama presentation can undergo some vital modifications based on the *Śāstras* on theatre art in which it clearly has its roots to elevate its status to a **Classical Theatre Form of Maharashtra**.

It must be remembered that Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra is a Bhārātīya Nāṭyaśāstra and it is meant for the entire subcontinent and not any one regional style can claim to be following the Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra in totality. It is also true that there is not one single individual theatrical or dance form whether classical or folk in the whole of our country which is not influenced by Nāṭyaśāstra. Therefore, Nāṭyaśāstra aesthetics can be used in which Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka can be moulded for the future presentation. According to Nāṭyaśāstra, Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka belongs to Dakṣiṇātya Pravṛtti and has dominance of Ārabhaṭī Vṛtti.

There is a huge stock of traditional literature which can be useful for Daśāvatārī dance-drama presentation. The dance–drama form has



traditional *tāla* patterns of its own, which are different from Hindustani classical and Carnatic music systems which can be studied separately. I would like to submit another interpretation in this paper that the rapid decline of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka was caused by unfortunate social changes for hereditary performers, under the rule of the Tanjavur Marāthas, who had patronized this tradition since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, collapsed in 1855C.E.

Training of drama continues in the Daśāvatārī *maṇḍalīs* of Sindhudurga district, but there is no specific training of hand gestures, foot work, gait, *driṣṭi bheda*, *grīva bheda*, *bhāva* and *rasa* presentation which is important along with the training of movement of other *aṅgas*, *upaṅgas* and *pratyāṅgas*. Absence of such training misleads the learners in many places and the standard of the dance and acting (drama) is badly affected. Hence training of the *cāris* and *gatīs* as delineated in our *Śāstras* would be helpful to enhance the quality of different kinds of performances.

Outside the Daśāvatārī *Maṇḍalīs* there is no authoritative body which can supervise and enforce the rules of this art form. The rules are to be maintained traditionally and all artists must adhere to the rules whether it is for the religious or social cause. There is a phased manner of learning dance and *abhinaya* in the Daśāvatārī *Maṇḍalīs* and there are no written rules or codes.

The need of the hour is that performers and all the concerned people arrive at a consensus regarding various problems faced by the Daśāvatārī troupes of Maharashtra. The practitioners and scholars should come together to experiment in this field. We have seen this happening in Bhāgavatamela of Tamil Nadu and Yakṣagāna of Karnataka. It is my ardent desire and ambition to elevate the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra to the status of receiving official recognition as a classical Theatre form.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Daśāvatāra has a deep impact on Indian social life. Representation of Daśāvatāra could be studied under various aspects of social structure. This concept has been expressed nation-wide in the rural Indian societies. It is expressed through folklore, folk-art and dance-dramas. The stories of Daśāvatāra have a message for the society of any time period. One just has to read between the lines and take the true meaning behind them, irrespective of its historicity or chronology.

These stories pass-on the message which is an extension of the Indian philosophy regardless of nationality or religion. The story of Daśāvatāra inspires people in the present society to have tolerance. It trains a person to be enduring and strong enough, not stuck by any catastrophe and he is able to face any situation very easily. Daśāvatāra is a cycle, 'good followed by evil'. These *avatāra* stories thought the theories of biological and political evolutions, codes of moral conduct, greatness of righteousness and the ills of evil thinking and materialism. Daśāvatāra stories are still popular among Indians and are used to provoke a human being to bring his upper nature above his lower nature. In short the Daśāvatāra reflected in Indian art help us to learn biological as well as political evolution and also most importantly the structure of a traditional dramatic form which was preserved in Maharashtra.

After the detail study of Daśāvatāra in Dance-Drama culture it is clear that this drama form has not even yet thrown off its essentially religious character that such it must have been in its origin. The essential element in the dramatization of the episodes in the Daśāvatāra in Indian art and culture is the keeping in remembrance of the hero and his exploits.

In the first chapter, introduction of Daśāvatāra and its development is supported by the references found in literature and books related to Indian theatre art to prove the popularity and importance of the Daśāvatāra. Important points like Daśāvatāra as a religious theme and popularity of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭakā of Maharashtra are discussed.

In the second chapter, the depiction of Daśāvatāra in Purāṇas, Literature, Paintings and sculptures also on different Indian artefacts are briefly discussed. The Art of painting has been a medium of both, expression and communication from the earliest known period of history. There are different styles of paintings which have emerged in due course of time in different geographic locations as a result of religious and cultural impact. The different *avatāra* motif on coins, their artistic and imaginative depiction is in itself a fascinating study. Present work is not aimed at the detailed research. But this effort will be able to communicate, the importance and the range of different coins in a concise manner. It is possible that some motifs on coins have escaped notice. Indian Sculptures show us, the development of stylization in other art forms including dance and drama. Sources for the discussion include the description from Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, temples of different *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, and temples and sculptures in Maharashtra. The symbolic and stylized quality of the images lies in proper presentation of the Hastas. Here the *hastas* for the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, are discussed from the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Abhinaya Darpaṇam and Bharatārṇava. Inscriptional evidences related to Daśāvatāra are also discussed. Philatelic collections of Daśāvatāra and Films and Multimedia projects are also considered while studying the importance of Daśāvatāra in Indian Culture. This is a proof of the popularity of the Daśāvatāra in the modern era.

This part presents some interesting information about the Daśāvatāra in relation with the evolutionary developments. In the third chapter, efforts are taken to study the similarities in the concept of evolution of life on earth and Daśāvatāra. Selective references like the Śāligrāma and Rudrākṣa are taken in to consideration. Darwin's theory of evolution and Fossils study has helped to understand the relation of the scientific and religious attitude behind the Daśāvatāra concept. Worship of the Śāligrāma and the Rudrākṣa is widespread and dates back to a distant past. We can clearly make out that the tendency of connecting natural objects to the form of Lord Viṣṇu is quite ancient, who is considered as a preserver of the Universe and protector of the earth or Bhūmidevi. That is why one can say that the Daśāvatāra theme also gives an indirect message that is "Save Earth"/ "save Nature".

The fourth chapter, takes a review of the collected compositions which are based on the Daśāvatāra theme in different Indian languages. In this chapter an effort has been taken to study the popularity and intensity of acceptance of the Daśāvatāra songs and folklores in Maharashtra. It also presents some interesting information about the narrative Daśāvatāra compositions by Marathi Viṣṇava saints. The tradition of singing Daśāvatāra compositions by Marathi Vaiṣṇava composers must have been the source of inspiration for the later composers and also many folk worshippers. This in the course of time eventually formed the strong background of the Daśāvatāra dance-drama of Maharashtra.

In the fifth chapter, the study is focussed on the Origins of Indian Drama and culture. Spheres of performances genres, i.e. classical, traditional and folk theatres are brought out. Indian traditional theatrical performances are discussed with reference to Daśāvatāra mentioned in Sanskrit Dramas, Prākṛit Kāvya and other dramatic art

forms. Importance of Daśāvatāra in Traditional Theatre and its continuity in Dance- Drama culture has been discussed in detail.

In some parts of the country the tradition of Daśāvatāra plays developed differently. The tradition of Daśāvatāra plays which developed in Maharashtra, all the ten *avatāra* were brought on the stage one after another and episodes connected with the major incarnations were presented elaborately. The remains of this tradition still linger in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

In some parts of India the dance-drama tradition was shaped and nurtured by the Kīrtankāras. It was also a period when the *bhakti* cult spread to many parts of India, and the art of dance-drama became a vehicle for its expression.

At the time of Rāmadāsa (1608-1681C.E.) there must have been a tradition of staging Daśāvatāra plays in Maharashtra but we do not find elaborate description of the Daśāvatāra play. Harikathā Kīrtana structure and semi-dramatic narrative performances have greatly contributed to the development of drama in Maharashtra. Marathi dance-musical plays were produced during the reign of Marathā rulers at Tanjavur between (1682-1832 C.E.) In these plays the Sūtradhāra calls himself Bhāgavat-Daśāvatāri. It is believed that Shyamji Naik Kale, a Brahmin Kirtankār first staged Daśāvatārī play at Adivare village in 1728C.E. imitating Yakṣagāna.

Coming to the most important part, the next section elucidates the background, presentation structure and different styles of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra. The sixth chapter deals with the different performance traditions and its development. A brief profile of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka culture is discussed in this chapter. Emphasis has been given to the changes that occurred culturally through the ages. It also throws light on the performance text and presentation structure.

At the end, the chapter concentrates on the necessity of the text and to make a preliminary investigation of the similarities and parallelisms between the Nāṭyaśāstra theory and Daśāvatāra theatre. The chapter brings out and opens-up the problem and the limitation of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka as a literary piece.

After collecting and collating the vast data-net, a summary of findings of all the chapters is given. This thesis maintains a perspective of dance-drama theatre, conceptually and structurally, with focus on the traditional Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra.

From the overall study of Daśāvatāra in Indian culture and its continuity in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra, one may observe that-

- The Daśāvatāra has a deep impact on Indian social life.
- Representation of Daśāvatāra could be studied under various aspects of social structure.
- This concept has been expressed nation-wide in the rural Indian societies.
- The Daśāvatāra in Indian art helps us to understand the biological evolution of living creatures.
- Daśāvatāra representation in Indian art showcases the social and political changes in the country based on religious beliefs.
- The essential element in the dramatization of the episodes in the Daśāvatāra in Indian art and culture is the keeping in remembrance of the hero and his exploits.
- At the end, the chapter concentrates on the necessity of the text and to make a preliminary investigation of the similarities and

parallelisms between the Nāṭyaśāstra theory and Daśāvatāra theatre. The chapter brings out and open-up the problem and the limitation of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka as a literary piece.

- The concept of Daśāvatāra has been very popular in Indian Art and culture from ancient times. The study of literature shows the impact of *bhakti* movement on the Nāṭaka culture of Maharashtra.
- All the styles of presenting the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka like Daśāvatārī Bhāgavata connected to the court tradition of Marāthā in Tanjavur, Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka connected to the temple tradition and Daśāvatārī Kheḷe connected to the *dhaikālā* or Jatrā tradition have some elements of Soṅgi-Daśāvatāra tradition.
- There are three distinct patterns of performance tradition.
  1. Soṅgī Daśāvatāra- The street performances on festive occasions
  2. Daśāvatārī Kheḷe, *dhaikāla* performance- the victory performance or simply for amusement
  3. Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka- the temple performance on special occasions like religious festivals
- The credit of preserving the tradition of presenting Daśāvatāra which has elements of Harikathā Kīrtana goes to the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Kuveshi village in Sindhudurga district of Maharashtra.
- There is a great relevance in studying, knowing and preserving this art form of Maharashtra. We have to understand the cultural importance of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Maharashtra, which has the elements of folk, traditional and classical and can be reflected in the contemporary theatre also.

- At the end, a preliminary investigation of the similarities and parallelisms between the Nāṭyaśāstra theory and the Daśāvatāra theatre has been done.

After looking at the contemporary status of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka of Kuveshi, it was felt necessary to carry out an in-depth study of the Nṛtya-Nāṭaka performance technique which is based on the Śāstras of Indian theatre art. The pattern of the presentation of this art form can be modified and strategically altered. These efforts can make it more vibrant to meet the recreational demand of the present generation and can elevate the status of the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka to a classical theatre form of Maharashtra.



## Scope for further research

Daśāvatāra is the most popular concept in Indian culture. The relationship of Daśāvatāra sculptures and paintings can be analyzed from many angles. Daśāvatāra can be studied with different perspectives in Indian art and culture.

There is a scope for further research in the study of Nāṭyaśāstrīc elements in the Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka. This effort can highlight its unique aesthetic sensibility. A more thorough study of the subtle differences between different presentation techniques would be necessary for a minute analysis of all the aspects of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka styles. Each style has developed specific aspects and it is only when all these are gathered together that a near total picture of what Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka may have been can emerge. This too, is not within the scope of the present study. Therefore, in this work, the aim is restricted to give a basic structure of different traditions of Daśāvatārī Nāṭaka from the point of view of its characteristics, content and nature of stylization, rather than the comparative and intricate study of the performance structure.

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## APPENDIX-A

### List of Daśāvatāra Compositions (Devanāgarī)

- 1 Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (Sanskrit)
- 2 Āṇḍāla (Tamil)
- 3 Annamācārya (Telugu)
- 4 Daṇḍāyudhapāṇipillai (Tamil)
- 5 Daśāvatāra (Malyalam-1)
- 6 Daśāvatāra (Malyalam-2)
- 7 Daśāvatāra (Malyalam-3)
- 8 Daśāvatāra Bhujaṅga Stavāna(Malyalam)
- 9 Jayadeva Kṛtī (Sanskrit)
- 10 Kūrma *avatāra* Stotra
- 11 Madhvācārya (Sanskrit)
- 12 Madhvācārya-Dvādaśa Stotra – Navama stutī (Sanskrit)
- 13 Matsya *avatāra* Stotra
- 14 Muthuswāmi Dikṣitar- Rāgamālika (Sanskrit)
- 15 Narasiṁha Nakha Stuti
- 16 Purandara Dāsa (Kannada)
- 17 Rājā Desingh- Film song (Tamil)
- 18 Śābdam (Telugu)
- 19 Swāmi Deśika (Sanskrit)
- 20 Swāti Tirunal (Sanskrit)
- 21 Tyāgarāja (Sanskrit)
- 22 Unknown author (Sanskrit)
- 23 Vādirāja Tīrtha (Sanskrit-1)
- 24 Vādirāja Tīrtha (Sanskrit-2)
- 25 Vāmana Stotra
- 26 Vijayadhvajātīrtha-Daśāvatāra Harigāthā (Sanskrit)

## 1. श्रीमत् आद्य शंकराचार्य विरचित (संस्कृत)

### ॥ नारायण नारायण जय गोविन्द हरे स्तोत्र ॥

नारायण नारायण जय गोविन्द हरे।

नारायण नारायण जय गोपाल हरे॥धृ॥

करुणापारावार वरुणालयगम्भीर॥१॥

घननीरद संकाश कृतकलिकल्मषनाश॥२॥

यमुनातीरविहार धृतकौस्तुभमणिहार॥३॥

पीताम्बर परिधान सुरकल्याणनिधान॥४॥

मञ्जुलगुञ्जाभूष मायामानुषवेष॥५॥

राधाऽधरमधुरसिक रजनीकरकुलतिलक॥६॥

मुरलीगान विनोद वेदस्तुतभूपाद॥७॥

बर्हि निबर्हापीड नटनाटकफणिक्रीडा॥८॥

ताटी दलनाट्य नटगुण विविध धनाढ्य॥९॥

गौतमपत्नीपूजन करुणाधनावलोकन॥१०॥

सम्भ्रमसीताहार साकेतपुरविहार॥११॥

अचलोद्धृति चञ्चत्कर भक्तानुग्रहतत्पर॥१२॥

नैगमगानविनोद रक्षःसुतप्रह्लाद॥१३॥

भारतियतिवर शङ्कर नामामृतमखिलान्तर॥१४॥

नारायण नारायण जय गोविन्द हरे।

नारायण नारायण जय गोपाल हरे॥

## 2. संत अंडाल दशावतार कृती (तमिळ)

### कूर्म

चिन्तुरच् चेम्पोतिप् पोल् तिरुमालिरुन्चोलै एन्कुम् ।

इन्तिर कोपन्कले एळुन्तुम् परन्तित्तनवाल् ।

मन्तरम् नात्ति अण्ऱु मतुरक् कोळुन्चरु कोन्त

चुन्तरत्तोलुतैयाण् चुलळैयिणिणू उय्तुन् कोल्लो

### वराह

पाचि तूर्त्तुक् कितन्त पास् मकट्कुप् पन्तु ओरु नळ् ।

माचु उतम्पिल् नीर् वारा मानम् इलाप् पन्नि आम्

टेचु उतैय तेवर् तिरुवरन्कच् चेल्वनास्

पेचियिरुप्पणकळ् पेक्कवुम् पेरवो

### नरसिंहम

नारु नरुम् पोलिल्मलिरुन्चोलै नम्पिक्कु नान् ।

नूरु ततविल् वेन्नेय्वाय्नेन्तु परावि वैत्तेन् ।

नूरु तता निरैन्त अक्कार अतिचिल् चोन्नेन् ।

एऱु तिवुतैयान् इन्नु वन्तु इवै कोल्लुन् कोलो ।

### वामन

ओन्कि उलकु अळन्त उत्तमण् पेर् पटि ।

नान्कळ् नम् पावैक्कुच् चाक्क निर् आतिनाल् ।

तीन्कु इण्ऱुइ नातु एल्लाम् तिन्कल् मुम्मरि पेय्तु ।

ओन्कु पेरुन् च्न्नेलुतु कयल् उकलप् ।

पून्कुवलैप् पोतिल् पोर्ईवन्तु कनपतुप्पत् ।  
तेन्काते पुक्कु इरुन्तु चीर्त्त मुलै पर्ऱि ।  
वान्कक् कुतम् निर्ऱैक्कुम् वल्लर् पेरुम् पचुक्कल् ।  
नीन्कत चेल्वम् निरैन्तुऱोर् एम्पावाय् ।

### राम

मुर्ऱु इलात पिल्लैकलोम् मुलै ।  
पोन्तिलातोमै नातोरुम् ।  
चिर्ऱिल् मेल् इड्डुक् कोण्टु नी चिर्ऱित्तु ।  
उन्तु तिण्णेण नाम् अतु ।  
कऱ्ऱुलोम् कतलै अटैत्तु अरक्कर् कुलन्कलै मूर्ऱवूम्-।  
चेर्ऱु इलन्कैयैप् पूचल् आक्किय ।  
चेवका एम्मै वातियेल् ।

### बलराम

अम्परमे तन्नीरे चोरे अरन् चेर्युम् ।  
एम्पेरुमान् नन्तकोपला एलुन्तिराय् ।  
कोम्पनाक्कु एल्लाम् कोलुन्तेकुल विलक्के ।  
एम्पेरुमात्ति यचोताय् अरिवुराय् ।  
अम्परम् ऊतु अरुत्तु ओन्कि उलकु अलन्त ।  
उम्पर् कोमाने उरन्कातु एलुन्तिराय् ।  
चेम्पोर् कललतिच् चेल्वापलतेवा ।  
उम्पियुम् नीयुम् उरन्कुऱोर् एम्पावाय् ।

## कृष्ण

मायनै मन्नु वतमतुरै मैन्तनैत् ।  
तूय पेरुनीर् यमुनैत् तुरैवनै।  
आयर् कुलत्तिनिल् तोन्नुम् अम्बिलक्कैत् ।  
तायैक् कुन्तल् विलक्कम् चेत तामोतरनैत् ।  
तूयो माय् वन्तु नाम् तूमलर् तूवित् तोलुतु।  
वायिनल् पाति मनत्तिनाल् चिन्तिक्क।  
पोय पिलैयुम् पुकुतरुवान् निन्नवुम् ।  
तीयिनिल् तूचुआकुम् चेप्पुलोर् एम्पावाय् ।

### 3. अण्णम्माचार्य

इन्दरिक्कि अभ्यम्बु लिचु चैयि  
कन्दु वगु मन्चि बन्गरु चैयि  
वेल्लेनि वेदमुलु वेदकि थैचिन चैयि  
चिलुकु गुब्बलि क्रिन्द चैर्चुचैयि  
कलिकि यौ भुकन्थ कोगलिन्चिन चैयि  
वलनैन कोनगोल्ल वदि चैयि इन्दरिक्कि  
थनिवोकबलिचेथ दन मदिगिन चैयि  
ओन्नन्ग भुदन मोसगु चैयि  
मोनसि जलनिधि यम्मु मोनकु थैचिन चैयि  
येनयनगेलु दरि इन्चु चैयि इन्दरिक्कि

पुरसथुल मनमुल पोल्लचिसन चयि

थुर गम्बु बरपदि दोदचेयि

थिरुवेन्कतचल धिसुदै मोक्षम्बु

थेरुवु प्रनुल केल्ल थेलिपेचेयि इन्दरिक्कि

#### 4. परन्दामने शरणम् (दशावतार पाडल) । रागमालिका। आदि

राग शन्कराभरण

पान्दामने शरणम् अनुदिनमुम् पाक्कडलिले तुयिलुम् अवतारने

राग कानडा

१ नामघळ् पोट्टिडुम् नान्मुखन् वेदत्ताल् क्षेममा उलगन्गळ् शेज्जिहक्कम्पोरामैयाल्-

मामरै तनैक् कवन्दु मा कडलिल् पुघुन्द सोमुखन् शिरम् तुणित्त मच्चावतारने

राग वसन्ता

२ आज्जियिल् पर्वतम् मत्ताघवे वासुकि शूज्जवे कयिट्टा सुरासुरर् इज्जुत्तिड

आज्जहमा मत्तिन् कीज्ज् मूज्जिग पुरम् तान्निग अमुदम् कडैय शेद कूर्मावतारने

राग पूर्विकल्याणि

३ धरणि अदनैक् कोण्डु इरुण्ड पातळम् शेन्नकण्डु ताविये पायाग सुरुळ मडक्किक्-

हिरण्याक्षनै वेन्नु इरुनिलम् कोम्बिल् कोण्डु परम भक्तरैक्कात्त वराहवतारने-

राग अठाणा

४ नम्बिये प्रह्लादन् हरिनमावेन्नदक्कु वेम्बिये हिरणि एन्नान् विष्णुवै काडु एन्नान्

कम्बत्तै पिळ्ळन्दु वन्दु गर्जित्तवनैक् कात्त सिम्हावतारने-कोन्नु अम्भुवियोरैक्-

राग बागेश्री

५ काशिप मैन्दनेन्नु कम्बुम् कुडैयुम् कोण्डु याचकन् पोल वन्दु मून्निडि दानम् केडु



राजनाम् मावलियिन् तलैयिलोर् पदम् वैत्ति मासिला वाऽह्वु तन्द वामनावतारने

राग कल्याणि

६ जमदग्नि बालनागि रविकुल वैरियागि समरिनिल् अरसर् मुडुम् जयित्तु मनम्  
मगिऽहन्दु

विमरिसै यागम् शेदु भुवि तनै काश्यपक्कु अमैत्तु तन्द परशुरामावतारने

राग आरभि

७ दशरथ मैन्दनागि ताटकैयै वदैत्तु दशमुख रावणादि शूऽहन्दडवे एदित्तु

असुरै वेररुत्तु हनुम विभीषण्मुक्कु इसै चिरन्जीवि तन्द रामावतारने

राग हिन्दोळम्

८ वसुदेव रोहिणियिन् मैन्दना वन्दुदित्तु कसिवुरुम् द्वापरत्तिल् कन्जक्कु मरुगनागि

भुजप्र लम्बासूरन् पुरम्कडै यावुम् वेनु दिशैयेन्गुम् पुगऽह् बलरामावतारने

राग मोहन

९ देवकि वसुदेवर् मैन्दनामेन्नु शोल्ल आवला नन्दगोपन् यशोदैयर् तान् वळक्क

पावन्गळ् तीर्त्तु पन्चपाण्डवर् तुणैयागि जीवक्कु अरु तन्द ऋष्णावतारने

राग सुरटि

१० गतियेन ओलमिडु विधियै निनैन्दुरुगि तुदित्तिडुम् मुनिवोक्कुत्तुणै पुरिवेनेन्नु

कुदिरै मेल् शेन्नु म्लेच्चरै वाळिनाल् वदैत्तु नर्प्पुगऽह् कोण्ड कलियवतारने

## 5. दशावतार कृती – १ (मल्याळी)

या थ्वर जल सन्चरे ।

या थ्वर वेद रक्षने ।

मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।१।

या थ्वर मन्धरोधरे ।

या थ्वर देव रक्षने ।

मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।२।

या थ्वर क्रोद वेशस्य ।

विधुथो भो समुध्यथो ।

मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।३।

या थ्वर चन्द्र मालय ।

धरने पोथ रक्षने ।

मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।४।

या थ्वर वतु वेशस्य ।

दरने बल बन्धने ।

मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।५।

या थ्वर रज हनने ।

या थवर वख्य रक्षने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।  
सा थवर क्व गथ हरे ।६।  
या थवर रक्षो हनने ।  
या थवर ब्रथु पलने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।  
सा थवर क्व गथ हरे ।७।  
या थवर कपि रजस्य पोशने ।  
सेथु बन्धने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।  
सा थवर क्व गथ हरे ।८।  
या थवर गोप कन्यनम् ।  
रक्षने कम्स हनने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।  
सा थवर क्व गथ हरे ।९।  
या थवर बैशिम हरने ।  
या थवर रुग्मि भन्दने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।  
सा थवर क्व गथ हरे ।१०।  
या थवर बुध सिधन्थ ।  
कधने बुध मोहने ।  
मय्यर्थे करुनमुर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।११।

या थ्वर थुरग रोहे ।

या थ्वर म्लेच मरने ।

मय्यर्थे करुणमूर्थे ।

सा थ्वर क्व गथ हरे ।१२।

सथ्य अवथर्य पुत्रेन ।

भक्थिको निरनेरिधम् ।

दसवथर स्थवकम् ।

वदन् मोक्षमपुन्यथ् ।१३।

## 6. दशावतार कृती – २ (मल्याळी)

अम्बोदु मेनयि वेदन्गल् वेन्दिदुम्।

अम्बुज नभने कै थोऽहुन्नेन् ।१।

आमययि मन्दरम् थन्गि निन्नेदुन्न।

थमरकन्नने कै थोऽहुन्नेन् ।२।

इक्षिथिये पन्दु पन्निययि वेन्दिदुम् ।

लक्ष्मि वर नधने कै थोऽहुन्नेन् ।३।

एदेऽहुम् मनुश केसरिययिदुम्।

कोद कर् वर्नने कै थोऽहुन्नेन् ।४।

उथमनगिय वमन मोर्थिये ।

भक्थियोदु एप्पोऽहुम् कै थोऽहुन्नेन् ।५।

ओकोदु भोपथिमरे कोल चेट्द ।

भर्गव रमने कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।६।

येथ्रयुम् वेरनयि वज्हुम् दसरथा

पुथ्रने सन्थथम् कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।७।

येरे बलमुल्ल सि बलभद्ररे ।

सर्व कलथिलुम् कै थोज्हुनेन् ।८।

ओक्केयोदुक्कुवन् मेलिल् पिरक्कुन्ना

गदक्कियेथन्नेयुम् कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।९।

ओरथे ज्जन् चेट्थ पापन्गल् नेन्गुवन्

नरयन निन्ने कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।१०।

ओवज्हि निन् कुज्हल्कम्बोदु चेरुवन् ।

देवकि नन्दन कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।११।

आम्बदि थन्निल् वलौरुन्न पैदले ।

कुम्बित्तु ज्जन् इथ कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।१२।

आ कनम् एरुम् दुरिथन्गल् पोक्कुवन्

पुशकर लोचन कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।१३।

नरयन गुरुवयुर् मरुविदुम् ।

करुन्य वरिधे कै थोज्हुन्नेन् ।१४।

## 7. दशावतार कृती – ३ (मल्याळी)

अम्बुजयध लोचन कोमल ।

कम्भुधरन वरिधे ।

कन्मशपह निन् पद पन्कजम् ।

चेम्मे कनुमरगनम् गोविन्द ।१।

आज़्हि थन्निल् मुज़्हु गिय वेदथे।

मेलुवन् ओरु मेनयि चेन्नुदन्।

एज़्हु सगरम् चोज़हे निन्नदुन्ना

वेशम् अम्बोदु कननम् गोविन्द ।२।

इचयोदे सुर असुर सन्चयम् ।

स्वच वरिधि थोयम् कदयुम्बोल् ।

कचबक्रिथि कै कोन्दु मेविदुम् ।

विस्व व्यपिये कनु मरगनम् गोविन्द ।३।

येशलेन्निये सोकर वेशमयि ।

द्वेशिचिदुम् हिरन्यक्ष्ने कोन्नु।

धथ्रे चक्रथे वेन्दु कोन्दु वन्नोरु ।

गथ्रम् मेम्बोदु कननम् गोविन्दा ।४।

उग्रनय हिरन्य कसिपुवे ।

निग्रहिच नरसिम्ह मोर्थिये ।

अग्रे प्रहलद सेविथनयित्तु ।

व्यग्रम् कोदथे कन्नेनम् गोविन्द।५।

ओदमोधम् महब्लि थन्नोदु ।

गोदमयि चेन्नु मोवदि भोमिये ।

यचिचेदुन्न वमन मोर्थिये ।

सेविचेदुमरगनम् गोविन्द ।६।

येन्नि कोन्दु इरुपथि ओन्नु प्रवस्यम् ।

येन्नमिल्लथ क्षत्रिय वम्सथ्थे ।

दन्दिपिच परसुरमक्रुथि ।

कन्निल् कनुमरकेनम् गोविन्द ।७।

येन नेर् मिज्जिह जनकि चोरने ।

बनमेय्थु वदिच स्मि रमने ।

कानि नेरम् पिरियथे येन् मुम्बिल्

कनु मरु अरुलिदेनम् गोविन्द ।८।

आयो हस्थिनपुरम् पुरि पुक्कु।

कय्यिल् मेवुम् कलप्पयिल् कोरेत्तु

पय्यवे एरिवान् थुनियुम्।

बद्र रमने कननम् गोविन्द ।९।

ओत्तोऽज्जिहयथे भो बरम् थर्पनयि ।

दुश्त भोपन्मरे कोन्नु मुदिचथुम् ।

पेत्तन्नम्बोदु कत्तियथोक्केयुम् ।

क्रिश्न रोपमे कननम् गोविन्द ।१०।

ओ ओर्किल् येथ्रयुम् पेदियाम् इनि मेल्  
गद्गि ययित्तु अवथरिक्कुन्नथुम् ।  
गद्गवुम् येन्दि म्लेचेरे ओक्केयुम् ।  
वेक्कम् कोल्वथुम् कननम् गोविन्द ।११।

ओविधमय पथवथरवुम् ।  
चोव्वोदे चोव्वन् आक्कु कज्जिह्नुन्नु ।  
दैवमे थव करुन्यम् कोन्दु मय् ।  
कै वरेनमे कैवल्यम् गोविन्द ।१२।

आन्थमिल्लथे गनन् चेय्थ पवथे ।  
निन् थिरुवदि नेकि कलन्जु उदन् ।  
आन्थ्य कलथु मुक्थिये नल्कुवन् ।  
बन्दु ने आल्लथिल्ल गोविन्द ।१३।

अच्युथनन्द गोविन्द मधव ।  
सचिदनन्द् रोप सनथन ।  
उचरिक्कय् वरेनम् निन् नामन्गल्  
विस्व नयक विश्नो नमस्थुथे ।१४।

## 8. ॥ दशावतार भुजंग स्तवन ॥ (मल्याळी)

चल्ललोल कल्लोल कल्लोलिनेस ।  
स्फुरन् नक्र चक्रधि वक्थम्बुलेन ।  
हथो येन मेनवथरेन सन्ख ।  
स पयाद अपय ज्जगद् वसुदेव ।१।



धरा निर्जरराधिभ्रधपर-

द कोपार नेरथुरध पथन्थि ।

द्रुथ कोर्म रोपेन येन स्वप्रुशते ।

स देव मुधे वोस्थु सेशन्ग सये ।२।

उदग्रे रधाग्रेसहोत्रापि गोत्र ।

स्थिथ यस्य वाकेथकग्रे शदन्ग्रे ।

थनोथि स्रयम् स स्रियम् वस्थनोथु।

प्रभु सि वरहवथरो मुररि ।३।

उरोधर समम्भिना येन दैथ्यो ।

रमविभ्रमे बन्गुरगैर् नखगै ।

हतो बक्थ वथसल्य जथेन धरो ।

रघोघम् सदा व सहिम्सन्यसिम्ह ।४।

छलध कलय्य त्रिलोकिम् बलियो ।

बलिम् सम्ब बध त्रिलोके बलेयो ।

थनुथ्वम् धधहन थनुम् सन्ध धनो।

विमोहम् मनो वमनो व स कुर्यध् ।५।

अध क्षत्रियासुक् प्रपन प्रमथ ।

प्रनथ्यथ् पिथ च प्रगेथ प्रथप ।

धराकारि येन अग्रजन्मग्रहो ।

विहारम् क्रियान् मनसे वस् अ रमा।६।

नथग्र सुग्रेव समज्य हेथुर् ।  
दस ग्रेव सन्थन सम्हर केथु ।  
धनुर्येन भग्नम् महथ कमहन्थु ।  
स मय् जनकि जनिरेनम्सि हन्थु ।७।  
गनथ गो धनम् येन गोवर्धनेन ।  
व्यरक्षिप्रथपेन गोवर्धनेन ।  
हथरथि चक्रि रन द्वम्स चक्रि ।  
पद द्वस्थ चक्रि सन् अ पथु चक्रि ।८।

धर बध पद्मसनस्थम्ग्रियशित् ।  
न्निया नितान्य अस्थ नसग्र द्रुशित ।  
य अस् थे कलो योगिनाम् चक्रवर्धि ।  
स बुध प्रभुधोस्थु निस्चिन्थ वर्धि ।९।

दुरचर सम्सार सम्हर करि ।  
भवथ्यस्वगो यप्पुपन प्रहरि ।  
मुररिर् दसकरध रेह कल्कि ।  
करोथु दिशाम् द्वम्सनम् व स कल्कि ।१०।

भुजन्गम् भुजन्गेस्यवथरन् ।  
दसपि स्मरन् स्रधयेमम् पतेध्या ।  
धरन्यवदस्थम् सरन्यो द्रुगन्थैर् ।  
वरेन्यस्स भक्थम् भरन्यम् भिभर्थि ।११।

## 9. महाकवी जयदेव दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

### अष्टपदी

प्रलयपयोधिजले धृतवनसि वेदम् ।  
विहितवहित्रचरित्रमखेदम् ॥  
केशव धृतमीनशरीर जय जगदीश हरे ॥१॥

क्षितिरतिविपुलतरे तव तिष्ठति पृष्ठे ।  
धरणिधरणकिणचक्रगरिष्ठे ॥  
केशव धृतकच्छपरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥२॥  
वसति दसनशिखरे धरणी तव लग्न ।  
शशिनि कलक्ङ्कलेव निमग्ना ॥  
केशव धृतसूकररूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥३॥  
तव करकमलवरे नखमद्भुतशृङ्गम् ।  
दलितहिरण्यकशिपुतनुभृङ्गम् ॥  
केशव धृतनरहरिरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥४॥  
छलयसि विक्रमणे बलिमद्भुतवामन ।  
पदनखनीरजनितजनपावन ॥  
केशव धृतवामनरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥५॥  
क्षत्रियरूधिरमये जगदपगतपापम् ।  
स्नपयसि पयसि शमितभवतापम् ॥  
केशव धृतभृगुपतिरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥६॥  
वितरसि दिक्षु रणे दिक्पतिकमनीयम् ।  
दशमुखमौलिबलिं रमणीयं ॥

केशव धृतरामशरीर जय जगदीश हरे ॥७॥  
 वहसि वपुषि विशदे वसनं जलदाभम् ।  
 हलहतिभीतिमिलितयमुनाभम् ॥  
 केशव धृतहलधररूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥८॥  
 निन्दति यज्ञविधेरहह श्रुतिजातम् ।  
 सदयहृदयदर्शितपशुघातम् ॥  
 केशव धृतबुद्धशरीर जय जगदीश हरे ॥९॥  
 म्लेच्छनिवहनिधने कलयसि करवालम् ।  
 धुमकेतुमिव किमपि करालम् ॥  
 केशव धृतकल्किशरीर जय जगदीश हरे ॥१०॥  
 श्रीजयदेवकवेरिदमुदितमुदारम् ।  
 शृणु सुखदं शुभदं भवसारम् ॥  
 केशव धृतदशविधरूप जय जगदीश हरे ॥११॥  
 वेदानुद्धरते जगन्निवहते भुगोलमुद्बिभ्रते  
 दैत्यं दारयते बलिं छलयते क्षत्रक्षयं कुर्वते ।  
 पौलस्त्यं जयते हलं कलयते कारुण्यमातन्वते  
 म्लेच्छान्मुर्च्छयते दशाकृतिकृते कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः ॥१२॥

## 10. कूर्मस्तोत्रम्

श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ देवा ऊचुः ॥  
 नमाम ते देव पदारविंदं प्रपन्नतापोपशमातपत्रम् ॥  
 यन्मूलकेता यततोऽञ्जसोरु संसारदुःखबहिरुत्क्षिपन्ति ॥  
 धातर्यदस्मिन्भव ईश जीवास्तापत्रयेणोपहता न शर्म ।  
 आत्मल्लभन्ते भगवंस्तवांग्घ्रिच्छायां सविद्यामत आश्रयेम ॥

मार्गति यत्ते मुखपद्मनीडैश्छंदः सुपर्णैर्ऋषयो विविक्ते ।  
यस्याघमर्षोदसरिद्वरायाः पदं पदं तीर्थपदं प्रपन्ना ॥  
यच्छ्रद्धया श्रुतवत्या च भक्त्या संमृज्यमाने हृदयेऽवधार्य ।  
ज्ञानेन वैराग्यबलेन धीरा व्रजेम तत्तेऽङ्घ्रिसरोजपीठम् ॥  
विश्वस्य जन्मस्थितिसंयमार्थं कृतावतारस्य पदांबुजं ते ।  
व्रजेम सर्वे शरणं यदीश स्मृतं प्रयच्छत्यभयं स्वपुंसाम् ॥  
यत्सानुबंधेऽसति देहगेहे ममाहमित्यूढदुराग्रहाणाम् ।  
पुंसां सुदूरं वसतोऽपि पुर्या भजेम तत्ते भगवत्पदाब्जम् ॥  
पानेन ते देव कथासुधायाः प्रवृद्धभक्त्या विशदाशया ये ।  
वैराग्यसारं प्रतिलभ्य बोधं यथांजसान्वीयुरकुण्ठधिष्णयम् ॥  
तथापरे चात्मसमाधियोगबलेन जित्वा प्रकृतिं बलिष्ठाम् ।  
त्वामेव धीराः पुरुषं विशन्ति तेषां श्रमः स्यान्न तु सेवय ते ॥  
तत्ते वयं लोकसिसृक्षयाऽद्य त्वयानुसष्टास्त्रिभिरात्मभिः स्म ।  
सर्वे वियुक्ताः स्वविहारतंत्रं न शक्नुमस्तत्प्रतिहर्तवे ते ॥  
यावद्बलिं तेऽज हराम काले यथा वयं चान्नमदाम यत्र ।  
यथोभयेषां त इमे हि लोका बलिं हरन्तोऽन्नमदंत्यनहाः ॥  
त्वं नः सुराणामसि सान्वयानां कूटस्थ आद्यः पुरुषः पुराणः ।  
त्वं देवशक्त्यां गुणकर्मयोर्नौ रेतस्त्वजायां कविमादधेऽजः ॥  
ततो वयं सत्प्रमुखा यदर्थं बभूविमात्मन् करवाम किं ते ।  
त्वं नः स्वचक्षुः परिदेहि शक्त्या देवक्रियार्थं यदनुग्रहाणाम् ॥  
इति श्रीमद्भागवतांतर्गतं कूर्मस्तोत्रं समाप्तम् ।

## 11. श्री मध्वाचार्य दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

### अथ षष्ठस्तोत्रम्

मत्स्यकरूप लयोदविहारिन् वेदविनेत्र चतुर्मुखवन्द्य ।

कूर्मस्वरूपक मन्दरधारिन् लोकविधारक देववरेण्य ॥

सूकररूपक दानवशत्रो भूमिविधारक यज्ञवराङ्ग ।

देव नृसिंह हिरण्यकशत्रो सर्वभयान्तक दैवतबन्धो ॥

वामन वामन माणववेष दैत्यवरान्तक कारणरूप ।

राम भृगूद्वह सूर्जितदीप्ते क्षत्रकुलान्तक शम्भुवरेण्य ॥

राघव राघव राक्षसशत्रो मारुतिवल्लभ जानकिकान्त ।

देवकिनन्दन नन्दकुमार वृन्दावनाञ्चन गोकुलचन्द्र ॥

कन्दफलाशन सुन्दररूप नन्दितगोकुल वन्दितपाद ।

इन्द्रसुतावक नन्दकहस्त चन्दनचर्चित सुन्दरिनाथ ॥

इन्दीवरोदरदलनयन मन्दरधारिन् गोविन्द वन्दे ।

चन्द्रशतानन कुन्दसुहास नन्दितदैवतानन्दसुपूर्ण ॥

देवकिनन्दन सुन्दररूप रुक्मिणिवल्लभ पाण्डवबन्धो ।

दैत्यविमोहक नित्यसुखादे देवसुबोधक बुद्धस्वरूप ॥

दुष्टकुलान्तक कल्किस्वरूप धर्मविवर्धन मूलयुगादौ

नारायणामलकारणमूर्ते पूर्णगुणर्णव नित्यसुबोध ॥

आनन्दतीर्थकृता हरिगाथा पापहरा शुभा नित्यसुखार्था ॥

द्वादशस्तोत्रेषु षष्ठस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम्

## 12. अथ नवमस्तोत्रम्

अतिमतमोगिरिसमितिविभेदन पितामहभूतिद गुणगणनिलय ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१॥  
विधिभवमुखसुरसततसुवन्दितरमामनोवल्लभ भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥२॥  
अगणितगुणगणमयशरीर हे विगतगुणेतर भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥३॥  
अपरिमितसुखनिधिविमलसुदेह हे विगत सुखेतर भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥४॥  
प्रचलितलयजलविहरण शाश्वतसुखमयमीन हे भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥५॥  
सुरदितिजसुबलविलुङ्घितमन्दरधर पर कूर्म हे भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥६॥  
सगिरिवरधरातळवह सुसूकरपरमविबोध हे भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥७॥  
अतिबलदितिसुत हृदय विभेदन जयनृहरेऽमल भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥८॥  
बलिमुखदितिसुतविजयविनाशन जगदवनाजित भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥९॥  
अविजितकुनृपतिसमितिविखण्डन रमावर वीरप भव मम शरणम् ।  
शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१०॥  
खरतरनिशिचरदहन परामृत रघुवर मानद भव मम शरणम् ।

शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥११॥  
 सुललिततनुवर वरद महाबल यदुवर पार्थप भव मम शरणम् ।  
 शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१२॥  
 दितिसुतविमोहन विमलविबोधन परगुणबुध्द हे भव मम शरणम् ।  
 शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१३॥  
 कलिमलहुतवह सुभग महोत्सव शरणद कल्कीश भव मम शरणम् ।  
 शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१४॥  
 अखिलजनविलय परसुखकारण परपुरुषोत्तम भव मम शरणम् ।  
 शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१५॥  
 इति तव नुतिवरसततरतेर्भव सुशरणमुरुसुखतीर्थमुनेः भगवन् ।  
 शुभतम कथाशय परमसदोदित जगदेककारण रामरमारमण ॥१६॥  
 इति श्रीमदानन्दतीर्थभगवत्पादाचार्य विरचितं  
 द्वादशस्तोत्रेषु नवमस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम्

### 13. मत्स्यस्तोत्रम्

श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥  
 नूनं त्वं भगवान्साक्षाद्धरिर्नारायणोऽव्ययः ।  
 अनुग्रहाय भूतानां धत्से रूपं जलौकसाम् ॥१॥  
 नमस्ते पुरुषश्रेष्ठ स्थित्युत्पत्त्यप्ययेश्वर ।  
 भक्तानां नः प्रपन्नानां मुख्यो ह्यात्मगतिर्विभो ॥ २ ॥  
 सर्वे लीलावतारास्ते भूतानां भूतिहेतवः ।  
 जातुमिच्छाम्यदो रूपं यदर्थं भवता धृतम् ॥ ३ ॥  
 न तेऽरविन्दाक्ष पदोपसर्पणं मृषा भवेत्सर्वसुहृत्प्रियात्मनः ।  
 यथेतरेषां पृथगात्मनां सतामदीदृशो यद्वपुरद्भुतं हि नः ॥ ४ ॥  
 इति श्रीमद्भागवतातर्गतं मत्स्यस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ।



## 14. मुत्थुस्वामी दिक्षितार दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

माधवो मांपातु मत्स्यावतारो।  
वेदस्तेय दुष्टहरो वेदादि रक्षणः ॥माधवो॥  
गोविन्दं नमाम्यहं गुरुगुहनुत कूर्मावतारं।  
देवराजादि पूजितं दिव्यामृतप्रदं ॥माधवो॥  
श्रीधरेण रक्षितोहं भूमिपाल सूकरेण।  
हित देवोपकारेण ह्यासुर हति निपुणेन ॥माधवो॥  
नरसिंहमाय नमस्ते प्रह्लाद प्रार्थिताय।  
हिरण्यप्राणहराय हरिहयादि वन्दितीय ॥माधवो॥  
वामनादन्यं न जानेहं नरवररूपिणः शुक्र।  
बलिराजादि श्रुतिज्ञान प्रबोधिना ॥माधवो॥  
परशुरामस्य दासोहं सीतापतिं शरणागतस्य।  
क्षत्रियकुल भीकरस्य जमदग्निऋषिपुत्रस्य ॥माधवो॥  
रामचन्द्रस्वामिनि भक्तिं करोमि दशरथ।  
कुमारात्मनि दशवदन भञ्जनात्मनि ॥माधवो॥  
बलराम मां कलय भोगीशादि सोदर।  
मुरळीगानानन्द मुकुन्दादि सदालोल ॥माधवो॥  
श्रीकृष्णं भजरे चित्त श्रीरुक्मीपतिं।  
शिशुपाल कंसादिहरं पाण्डवादि रक्षितवरं ॥माधवो॥  
कलियुग वरवेङ्कटेशं खलसमूहहत सुरेशं।  
अलमेलु मङ्गेशं अच्युतादि भजेहमनिशं ॥माधवो॥

## 15. ॥ श्री नृसिंहनखस्तुतिः ॥

पान्त्वस्मान् पुरुहूत वैरि बलवन् मातङ्ग मादृष्टा ।  
कुंभोच्चाद्रिविपाटनाऽधिकपटु प्रत्येक वज्रायिताः ।  
श्रीमत्कण्ठीरवास्यप्रततसुनखरा दारिताराऽतिदूर ।  
प्रध्वस्त ध्वांत शांत प्रवितत मनसा भाविता भूरिभागैः ॥ १ ॥  
लक्ष्मीकांतसमंततोऽपिकलयन् नैवेशितुः ते समम् ।  
पश्याम्युत्तमवस्तु दूरतरतो पास्तं रसो योऽष्टमः ।  
यद्रोशोत्कर दक्षनेत्रकुटिलः प्रांतोत्थिताऽग्नि स्फुरत् ।  
खद्योतोपमविस्फुलिङ्ग भसिता ब्रह्मेशशक्रोत्कराः ॥ २ ॥  
इति श्रीमदानंदतीर्थ भगवत्पादाचार्य विरचितं  
श्री नृसिंहनखस्तुतिः संपूर्णम्  
॥ भारतीरमणमुख्यप्राणांतर्गत श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ॥

## 16. श्री पुरंदरदास दशावतार कृती (कन्नड)

थरले रन्ने कप्पु मैयव यथर चलुवने ।  
करिय जतेय जोगि गिन्थ उथ्थमनलवेने ।  
जलधि योलु वस वेने मनेगलु इल्लवे ।  
ललने केलु कदि गिन्थ लेसु अल्लवे ।  
मन्धर गिरिय पोश्चिहुधु एनु चन्दवे ।  
कन्धन ओय्धु अदवियल्लिदुवुधु यव न्ययवे ।  
मन्ननु अगेधु बेरनौ मेलुवुधु एनु स्वधवे ।

थन्न कैयल्लि कपल पिदिवुधु यव न्ययवे ।  
 मुथ्थिन हर इरलु करुल मलेय् धरिसुवरेय् ।  
 निथ्य रुन्द मलेय् धरिसोधु यव न्ययवे ।  
 गिद्ध नगि बेलदु अलेवुदु एनु न्ययवे ।  
 गुद्ध मगल थन्देगे मुनियोध्यव न्ययवे ।  
 पिथन मथ केलि मथेय शिरवनलिवरे ।  
 किसिथि कन्त नगि इरुवोदु यव न्ययवे ।  
 कोदग करदि कपिगल हिन्दु बन्धु बलगवे ।  
 कोदि बन्ध भोथ बलग ज्जन्थि सम्बन्धवे ।  
 हविन हेदेय थुलिवरेने अन्जिकिल्लवे ।  
 हवे मय्यिगे सुथ्थि इरलु ह्यन्गे जेविपने ।  
 बथ्थलु इरवनेनु अवगे नचिकिल्लवे ।  
 सथ्थ गजध चर्म होधेयलु हेसिकिल्लवे ।  
 उथ्थम थेजि इरलु धरेयोलु हध्धनु एर्वरे ।  
 एथ्थिन बेन्नु एरिधवरु बुध्धिवन्थरे ।  
 हरि हर रिगे सम्यवेने हेले रुक्मिनि ।  
 पुरन्धर वित्तल सर्वोथ्थम केले भवनि ।

## 17. मङ्गलं

मकुट के मङ्गलं मच्चावतार के  
 मुख के मङ्गळं मुद्दु कूर्मुनिके  
 सुखण्ठ के मङ्गळं सूकर रूपके

नख के मङ्गळं नरसिण्गनि के  
वक्षक्के मङ्गळं वट्टु वामननिके  
पक्षक्के मङ्गळं भार्गव के  
कक्षक्के मङ्गळं काकुस्त राम के  
कुक्षिकके मङ्गळं कृष्ण रायनि के  
उरुवगळिके मङ्गळं उत्तम बौद्ध के  
चरण के मङ्गळं चेलुव कल्कि के  
परिपरि मङ्गळं परमानन्द के  
पुरन्धर विट्टल के जयमङ्गळ

## 18. राजा देसिंगे

षण्मुखप्रिया  
पार्कदल् अलै मेले  
पार्कडल् अलै मेले पाम्बणयिन् मेले  
पल्लु कोन्डाय् रङ्गनाथा उन्दन् -  
पदमलर् निज्जहल् तेडि परवशमोडु पादि  
गति पेरवे ज्ञानम् नी तान् देव  
केदारगौळ  
कातकनान ओरु शोमुगन् कै कोन्डु  
कडालिडये ओळित्त मर्णे नाङ्गुम् पिन्नर् -  
मेदिनि तान् मीळ पादगन् तान् माळ  
मीनवतारम् शेद तिरुमाले

साम

वानवरुम् तानवरुम् आजिह अमुदम् कडैय

मन्दरगिरि तन्नै ताङ्गिडवे ओरु -

कूनुडैय ओडु कोण्ड कूर्मावतारम् एन्नुम्

कोलमुत्त्रा पुगज्हु ओङ्गिडवे

अठाणा

ईनन् हिरन्याक्षन् एनुम् पडु पावि

पाया एज्हु कडालुळ् मर् ऐन्द भूदेवि अवळ्

दीनरक्षका सकल जीवरक्षका एनवे

मानिलत्तै तूक्किय वराह वडिवानवने

मोहनम्

एङ्गिरुक्किर् आन् हरि अवन् एङ्गिरुक्किर् अन् एबु

हिरणियन् शोल्लै केट्टु इडैमर् इत्ते अवन् पिळै

एङ्गुम् इरुप्पान् अवन् इङ्गुमिरुप्पान्

अन्द तूणील् इरुप्पान् एन्ऱु इयम्बियताल् नेन्द तोल्लै नीङ्गवुम्

पोन्गुशिन वम्बन्दु बूदल् उडम्बुम् दसै तिन्ने

मुन्द तोन्दियोडु मणीकुडलुम् उदिरम् शिन्दवे

नकम् कोण्टु कीरुम् नरस्निगम्मा

अवतारने शङ्क चक्र धारने अवतारने उपकारने

बिलहरि

मूवडि मण् केट्टु वन्दु मण्णळन्दु विण्णळन्दु

मा बलि शिरमळन्द वामनने

तन्दै आवियै पिरित्ततनाल् सूरियकुल वैरियाग

अमैन्द परशुरामन् आनवने

कानडा

देवर्गळै शिरैमीट्टु रावणादि उयिर्मात्त

दशरथ श्री राम अवतारने

भूमि तनिले पुगऱ्हयुम् उऱ्हवोर् कलपैदनै

बुजम् तन्निल् ताङ्गि निन्न बलरामने

कापि

आवणि रोहिणियिल् अष्टमियिले अर्दजाम नेरत्तिले अवदरित्तोने

आयर्पादि यशोद नन्दलाल पतिनायिर्म् गोपियर् परमानन्द लोल

भूभारम् तीर्क भारत पोर् मुडित्त शीला

गोपालकृष्णा आदिमूला परिपाल

रञ्जनि विजयनागरि

पञ्चपातकम् वादुडन् कोडिय वञ्चकम् मिन्नबेदकम् शेद

अञ्जिडादवर् आडिडुम् नाटक मेडै याडिय कलियुगम्

अऱ्हक्कवे धर्मम् तऱ्हैक्कवेअन्बु कोण्ड कल्कि अवतारन् -

शिङ्गारन् दशावतारन् नीये पार्कडल्

## 19. कुचिपुडी शब्दम्

मत्सरमुन मदि अम्बुदिलोजोचियुन्न सोमक त्रुन्चियु

विच्चलविदि वेदमुलु अजुनकुडिचितिवो मत्स्यवतारा

पलुमरु मिमि प्रस्तुति चेयगचेलगि सुरुलु जलदि मदिम्पग

कलिमि बलिमि येलमितो नोसगिन कुलगिरिदर कूर्मवतारा  
 स्तिरमुग दरन् उर्वदि चेकोनिउरगपदमु इरुवुकु जोन्चिन  
 हिरन्याक्षु बरिमारचितिवो वर सुगुन वरह रूप  
 जम्बरि सुरह प्रमुक कदम्बम्बुलु रक्षिम्पन्ग स्तम्बम्बुन  
 वेदलियु दानवदिम्बकु गाचितिवो नरसिम्ह  
 मनितमुग मुल्लोतम्बुलु तन्नोपग कपादन्ग  
 मानुग मोददुगुलुबलिचे दानमुगोनु वामन रूप  
 तरिमि तरिमि दरनि पतुलनुपरसुवुचे तुरुमदितिवो  
 वर वेर पराक्रममुन दर परगितिवो बार्गवरामा  
 देसरद तनयुदवै सुरलकुवसमुगानि देशमुकु  
 त्रुन्चिय विसोदमुग अयोध्यकु सेततो वेम्चेसितिवो रघुरामा  
 यादव वम्सब्धि सुधकरुआदि देवुदु अनुजुदु क ग  
 मोद मोसगि खलुलन त्रुन्चियुमेदिन भर मु उदिपिन बलराम  
 अन्गलनुकु सिग्गु सिग्गद विन्चेदिअन्गज सम रूपमुतो रन्गुग  
 पुरकान्तल व्रतमुलु बन्ग परचुगातपु बोदवतारा  
 कलि बादलु मान्पग नित्तुग करवलम् बोनियु  
 गेतकमुन येक्कि दुरत्मुलगेतु अद चेदि कल्क्यवतर  
 सुरुल् मेल मेलनि पोगदगनिरतमुनि दासुल ब्रोवनु  
 परग व्याग्रपुरमुनवेलसिन वरदराज देव  
 आस्मित सुरबोज परक् परक्

## 20. वेदांत देसिका दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

श्रीः

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

॥ श्रीदशावतारस्तोत्रम् ॥

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।

वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

देवो नः शुभमातनोतु दशधा निर्वर्तयन् भूमिकां

रङ्गे धामनि लब्ध निर्भर रसैरध्यक्षितो भावुकैः ।

यद्भावेषु पृथग्विधेष्वनुगुणान्भावान् स्वयं बिभ्रती

यद्धर्मैरिह धर्मिणी विहरते नानाकृतिर्नायिका ॥१॥

निर्मग्न श्रुति जाल मार्गण दशा दत्त क्षणैर्वीक्षणैः

अन्तस्तन्वदिवारविन्द गहनान्यौदन्वतीनामपाम् ।

निष्प्रत्यूह तरङ्ग रिङ्गण मिथः प्रत्यूढ पाथश्छटा-

डोलारोह सदोहळं भगवतो मात्स्यं वपुः पातु नः ॥२॥

अव्यासुर्भुवन त्रयीमनिभृतं कण्डूयनैरद्विणा

निद्राणस्य परस्य कूर्म वपुषो निःश्वास वातोर्मयः ।

यद्विक्षेपण संस्कृतो दधिपयः प्रेङ्खोळपर्यङ्किका-

नित्यारोहण निर्वृतो विहरते देवः सहैव श्रिया ॥३॥

गोपायेदनिशं जगन्ति कुहना पोत्री पवित्री कृत-

ब्रह्माण्डः प्रळयोर्मि घोष गुरुभिर्घोणा रवैर्घुर्घुरैः ।

यद्दंष्ट्राङ्कुर कोटि गाढ घटना निष्कम्प नित्य स्थितिः

ब्रह्म स्तम्बमसौदसौ भगवती मुस्तेव विश्वंभरा ॥४॥



प्रत्यादिष्ट पुरातन प्रहरण ग्रामः क्षणं पाणिजैः  
 अव्यात् त्रीणि जगन्त्यकुण्ठ महिमा वैकुण्ठ कण्ठीरवः ।  
 यत्प्रादुर्भवनादवन्ध्य जठरा यादृच्छिकाद् वेधसां  
 या काचित् सहसा महासुर गृह स्थूणा पितामह्यभूत् ॥५॥  
 व्रीडा विद्ध वदान्य दानव यशो नासीर धाटी भटः  
 त्रैयक्षं मकुटं पुनन्नवतु नस्त्रैविक्रमो विक्रमः ।  
 यत्प्रस्ताव समुच्छ्रित ध्वज पटी वृत्तान्त सिद्धान्तिभिः  
 स्त्रोतोभिः सुरसिन्धुरष्टसु दिशा सौधेषु दोधूयते ॥॥  
 क्रोधाग्निं जमदग्नि पीडन भवं संतर्पयिष्यन् क्रमात्  
 अक्षत्रामिह सन्ततक्ष य इमां त्रिःसप्त कृत्वः क्षितिम् ।  
 दत्त्वा कर्माणि दक्षिणां क्वचन तामास्कन्दा सिन्धुं वसन्  
 अब्रह्मण्यमपाकरोतु भगवानाब्रह्म कीटं मुनिः ॥७॥  
 पारावार पयो विशेषण कला पारीण कालानल-  
 ज्वाला जाल विहार हारि विशिख व्यापार घोर क्रमः ।  
 सर्वावस्थ सकृत्प्रपन्न जनता संरक्षणैक व्रती  
 धर्मो विग्रहवानधर्म विरतिं धन्वी स तन्वीत नः ॥८॥  
 फक्कत्कौरव पट्टण प्रभृतयः प्रास्त प्रलम्बादयः  
 तालाङ्कस्य तथाविधा विहृतयस्तन्वन्तु भद्राणि नः ।  
 क्षीरं शर्करयेव याभिरपृथग्भूताः प्रभूतेर्गुणैः  
 आकौमारकमस्वदन्त जगते कृष्णस्य ताः केलयः ॥९॥  
 नाथायैव नमःपदं भवतु नश्चित्रैश्चरित्र क्रमैः  
 भूयोभिर्भुवनान्यमूनि कुहना गोपाय गोपायते ।

काळिन्दी रसिकाय काळिय फणि स्फार स्फटा वाटिका-  
 रङ्गोत्सङ्ग विशङ्क चंक्रम धुरा पर्याय चर्या यते ॥१०॥  
 भाविन्या दशया भवन्निह भव ध्वंसाय नः कल्पतां  
 कल्की विष्णुयशस्सुतः कलि कथा कालुष्य कूलकषः ।  
 निःशेष क्षत कण्टके क्षितितले धारा जलौघैर्ध्रुवं  
 धर्म कार्तयुगं प्ररोहयति यन्निस्त्रिंश धाराधरः ॥११॥  
 इच्छा मीन विहार कच्छप महा पोत्रिन् यदृच्छा हरे  
 रक्षा वामन रोष राम करुणा काकुत्स्थ हेला हलिन् ।  
 क्रीडा वल्लव कल्क वाहन दशा कल्किन्निति प्रत्यहं  
 जल्पन्तः पुरुषाः पुनन्ति भुवनं पुण्यौघ पण्यापणाः ॥१२॥  
 विद्योदन्वति वेङ्कटेश्वरकवौ जातं जगन्मङ्गळं  
 देवेशस्य दशावतार विषयं स्तोत्रं विवक्षेत यः ।  
 वक्त्रे तस्य सरस्वती बहु मुखी भक्तिः परा मानसे  
 शुद्धिः कापि तनौ दिशासु दशसु ख्यातिः शुभा जृम्भते ॥३॥  
 ॥ इति श्रीदशावतारस्तोत्रं समाप्तम् ॥  
 कवितार्किकसिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।  
 श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

## 21. महाराजा स्वाति तिरुणाल दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

कमलजास्यहृत निगमराशि हयग्रीव-दमन मीनशरीर मामवोदार ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
धृतमन्दरभूधर दिव्यकूर्मरूपपीतसुधामोदितविबुधजात ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
घोरहिरण्याक्ष दारणसूकराजगदाधार ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥ कार वसुधाधार-  
प्रह्लाद अवनोपात्त प्रतिभय नृहरेप्रह्लादितसज्जन दैत्यनिधन ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
कलितवामनरूप खण्डितोद्धत महा-बलि गर्वजाल सुगुणपाल ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
शितधारकुठार रञ्चितबाहो हरा-धीतामितशास्त्र रिपुभीम भार्गवराम ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
मनुकुलतिलक वञ्चनपर दशकण्ठघनवात रघुवीर सङ्गरधीर ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥-  
सीरसमाकृष्ट सारहस्तिनापुरघोरप्रलम्बहर बलदेव शूर ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥  
नन्दनीयतम बृन्दावनरचित्कुन्दसायकलील बालगोपाल ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥-  
कलियुगान्त भावि कल्किरूप सजल-जलदाभ निजशोभ पङ्कजनाभ ॥कमलजास्यहृत॥

## 22. पंडित त्यागराज दशावतार कृती (संस्कृत)

दीनजनावन श्रीराम। दानवहरण श्रीराम। वीन विमान श्रीराम। मीन शरीर श्रीराम।  
निर्मलहृदय श्रीराम। कार्मुकबाण श्रीराम। शर्म फलप्रद श्रीराम। कुर्मावतार् श्रीराम।  
श्रीकरसुगुण श्रीराम। श्रीकरलाळित श्रीराम। श्रीकरूणार्णव श्रीराम। सूकर रूप श्रीराम।  
सरसिजन श्रीराम। सुरपतिविनुत श्रीराम। नखखेष श्रीराम। नरहरि रूप श्रीराम।  
कामितफलद श्रीराम। पामर दूर श्रीराम। सामज वरद श्रीराम। वामनरूप श्रीराम।  
अघतिमिरादित्य श्रीराम। विगळितमोह श्रीराम। रघुकुल तिलक श्रीराम। भृगुसुतरूप  
श्रीराम।  
कुशलव जनक श्रीराम। कुशलदचतुर श्रीराम। दशमुख मर्दन श्रीराम। दशरथनन्दन  
श्रीराम।

कलिमल हरण श्रीराम। जलजभवार्चित श्रीराम। सललित वचन श्रीराम। हलधररूप  
श्रीराम।

सिद्धजनप्रिय श्रीराम। प्रसिद्ध चरित श्रीराम। बद्ध सुवसन श्रीराम। बुद्धावतार् श्रीराम।  
जयकर नाम श्रीराम। विभयनाशन हरे श्रीराम। ह्यमुखरूप जयरथसारथे श्रीराम।-  
श्रीराम।

भागवत प्रिय श्रीराम। आगममूल श्रीराम। नाग सुशयन श्रीराम। त्यागराजार्चित श्रीराम।

### 23. ॥ दशावतार स्तोत्रम् ॥

नामस्मरणादन्योपायं नहि पश्यामो भवतरणे।

राम हरे कृष्ण हरे तव नाम वदामि सदा नृहरे।।

वेदोद्धार विचार मते सोमक दानव संहरणे ।

मीनाकार शरीर नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

मंथाना चल धारण हेतो देवासुर परिपालन भो ।

कूर्माकार शरीर नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

भूचोरक हर पुण्यद मुर्ते क्रोढोद्धत भूदेश हरे ।

क्रोढाकार शरीर नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

हेमकशिपु तनु धारण हेतो प्रल्हादासुर पालन भो ।

नरसिम्हाच्युत रूप नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

बलि मद बंजन वितत मते पादो द्वय कृत लोक कृते ।

पटु वटु वेष मनोज्ञ नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

क्षिति पति वंश संभव मूर्ते क्षिति पति रक्षा क्षत मुर्ते ।

भृगुपति राम वरेण्य नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

सीता वल्लभ दाशरथे दशरथ नंदन लोक गुरो ।

रावण मर्दन राम नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।  
कृष्णानंद कृपा जलधे कंसारे कमलेश हरे ।  
कालिय मर्दन कृष्ण नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।  
त्रिपुर सती मानवि हरणा त्रिपुर विजय मार्गण रूपा ।  
शुद्ध ज्ञान विबुद्ध नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।  
दुष्ट विमर्दन शिष्ट हरे कलि तुरगोत्तम वाहन रे ।  
कल्किन् कर करवाल नमो हर भक्तं ते परिपालय मां।।

## 24. श्रीमत् वादिराज तीर्थ दशावतारस्तुति (संस्कृत)

प्रोष्ठीश विग्रह सुनिष्ठीव नोद्धत विशिष्टांबुचारि जलधे।  
कोष्ठंतराहित विचेष्टागमौघ परमेष्ठीडितत्वमवमाम्।  
प्रेष्ठार्कसूनुमनु जेष्ठार्थमात्मविदतीष्टो युगांत समये।  
स्थेष्ठात्म शृङ्गधृत काष्ठाम्बुवाहन वराष्टा पदप्रभ तनो॥ १॥  
खण्डीभवद्बहुळडिन्डीरजृम्भण सुचण्डी कृतो दधि महा।  
काण्डाति चित्र गति शौण्डाद्य हैमरद भाण्डा प्रमेय चरित।  
चण्डाश्वकण्ठमद शुण्डाल दुर्हृदय गण्डा भिखण्डाकर दो।  
श्चण्डा मरेशहय तुण्डाकृते दशम खण्डा मलं प्रदिश मे॥ २॥  
कूर्माकृते त्ववतु नर्मात्म पृष्ठधृत भर्मात्म मंदर गिरे।  
धर्मावलंबन सुधर्मा सदांकलित शर्मा सुधावितरणात्।  
दुर्मान राहु मुख दुर्मायि दानवसुमर्मा भिभेदन पटो।  
धर्माक कान्ति वर वर्मा भवान्भुवन निर्माण धूत विकृतिः॥ ३॥  
धन्वंतरेऽङ्गरुचि धवंतरेरितरु धवंस्तरीभवसुधा।

भान्वंतरावसथ मन्वन्तराधिकृत तन्वन्तरौषधनिधे।  
 दंन्तरङ्गशुबुदन्वन्तमाजिशुवि तन्वन्ममाब्धि तनया।  
 सून्वन्तकात्महृदतंवरावयव तन्वन्तरार्तिजलधौ ॥ ४ ॥  
 याक्षीरवार्धिमदनाक्षीणदर्पदितिजाक्षोभितामरगणा।  
 पेक्षाप्तयेऽजनिवलक्षांषुबिंबजिदतीक्षणालकावृत्तमुखी।  
 सूक्ष्मावलग्नवसनाक्षेपकृत्कुच कटाक्षाक्षमीकृतमनो।  
 दीक्षासुराहतसुधाक्षाणिनोऽवतुसु रूक्षेक्षणाद्धरितनुः ॥ ५ ॥  
 शिक्षादियुन्निगम दीक्षासुलक्षण परिक्षाक्षमाविधिसती।  
 दाक्षायणी क्षमति साक्षाद्रमापिनय दाक्षेपवीक्षणविधौ।  
 प्रेक्षाक्षिलोभकरलाक्षार सोक्षित पदाक्षेपलक्षितधरा।  
 साक्षिरितात्मतनु भूक्षारकारिनिटिलाक्षाक्षमानवतु नः ॥ ६ ॥  
 नीलाम्बुदाभशुभ शीलाद्रिदेहधर खेलागृतोधिधुनी।  
 शैलादियुक्त निखिलेला कटाद्यसुर तूलाटवीदहन ते।  
 कोलाकृते जलधि कालाचयावयव नीलाब्जदंष्ट्र धरिणी।  
 लीलास्पदोरुतर मूलाशियोगिवर जालाभिवन्दित नमः ॥ ७ ॥  
 दंभोलितीक्षणनख संभेदितेन्द्ररिपु कुंभीन्द्र पाहि कृपया।  
 स्तंभार्भ कासहनडिंभाय दत्तवर गंभीर नाद नृहरे।  
 अंभोदिजानुसरणांभोजभूपवन कुंभीन सेश खगरात्  
 कुंभीन्द्र कृत्तिधर जम्भालि षण्मुख मुखांभोरु हाभि नुत माम् ८ ॥  
 पिङ्गाक्ष विक्रम तुरङ्गादि सैन्य चतुरङ्गा वलिप्त दनुज।  
 साङ्गा ध्वरस्थ बलि साङ्गावपात हृषिताङ्गा मरालिनुत ते।  
 शृङ्गार पादनख तुङ्गाग्रभिन्न कन काङ्गाण्डपत्ति तटिनी।

तुङ्गाति मङ्गल तरङ्गा भिभूत भज काङ्गाघ वामन नमः॥ ९॥

ध्यानार्ह वामन तनोनाथ पाहि यजमाना सुरेशवसुधा।

दानाय याचनिक लीनार्थ वाग्वशित नानासदस्य दनुज।

मीनाङ्क निर्मल निशानाथ कोटिल समानात्म मौञ्जिगुणकौ।

पीनाच्छ सूत्रपद यानात पत्रकर कानम्यदण्डवरभृत्॥ १०॥

धैर्याम्बुधे परशुचर्याधिकृत्तखल वर्यावनीश्वर महा।

शौर्याभिभूतकृत वीर्यात्मतजाभुज वीर्यावलेपनिकर।

भार्यापराधकुपितार्याज्ञयागलितनार्यात्म सूगल तरो।

कार्यापराधमविचार्यार्य मौघजयि वीर्यामिता मयि दया॥ ११॥

श्रीरामलक्ष्मणशुकाराम भूरवतुगौरामलामितमहो।

हारामरस्तुत यशोरामकान्तिसुत नोरामनोरथहर।

स्वारामवर्यरिपु वीरामयार्धिकर चीरामलावृतकटे।

स्वाराम दर्शनजमारामयागतसुघोरामनोरमलब्धकलह॥ १२॥

श्रीकेशवप्रदिशनाकेश जातकपिलोकेश भग्नरविभू।

स्तोकेतरार्तिहरणाकेवलार्तसुखधीकेकिकालजलद।

साकेतनाथवरपाकेरमुख्यसुत कोकेन भक्तिमतुलाम्

राकेन्दु बिंबमुख काकेक्षणापह हृशीकेश तेऽङ्घ्रिकमले॥ १३॥

रामेनृणां हृदभिरामेनराशिकुल भीमेमनोद्वयरमताम्

गोमेदिनीजयितपोमेयगाधिसुत कामेनिविष्ट मनसी।

श्यामे सदा त्वयिजितामेय तापसज रामे गताधिकसमे।

भीमेशचापदलनामेयशौर्यजित वामे क्षणे विजयिनी॥ १४॥

कान्तारगेहखल कान्तारटद्वदन कान्तालकान्तकशरम्।

कान्तारयाम्बुजनि कान्तान्ववायविधु कान्ताश्मभादिपहरे।  
 कौन्तालिलोलदल कान्ताभिशोभितिल कान्ताभवंतमनुसा।  
 कान्तानुयानजित कान्तारदुर्गकट कान्तारमात्ववतु माम् १५॥  
 दान्तं दशानन सुतांतं धरामधिवसंतं प्रचण्ड तपसा।  
 क्लांतं समेत्य विपिनांतं त्ववाप यमनंतं तपस्वि पटलम्।  
 यान्तं भवारति भयान्तं ममाशु भगवंतं भरेण भजतात्।  
 स्वांतं सवारि दनुजांतं धराधरणिशान्तं स तापसवरम् ॥ १६॥  
 शंपाभचापलव कंपास्त शत्रुबल संपादितामितयशाम्।  
 शं पाद तामरस संपाति नोल मनु कंपार सेन दिशमे।  
 संपाति पक्षि सहजंपाप रावण हतं पावनं यद कृथाः।  
 त्वां पाप कूप पति तं पाहि मां तदपि पंपा सरस्त टचर ॥ १७॥  
 लोलाक्ष्यपेक्षितसुलीलाकुरङ्गवद खेलाकुतूहल गते।  
 स्वालापभूमिजनिबालापहार्यनुज पालाद्यभो जय जय।  
 बालाग्निदग्धपुर शालानिलात्मजनि फालात्तपत्तलरजो।  
 नीलाङ्गदादिकपि मालाकृतालिपथ मूलाभ्यतीत जलधे ॥ १८॥  
 तूणीरकार्मुककृपाणीकिणाङ्कभुज पाणी रविप्रतिमभाः।  
 क्षोणिभपत्तिनुभ घोणी मुखादिघनवेणीसुरक्षणकरः।  
 शोणिभवन्नयन कोणी जिताम्बुनिधि पाणी रितार्हणमणी।  
 श्रेणीवृताङ्घ्रिरिह वाणीशसूनुवर वाणीस्तुतो विजयते ॥ १९॥  
 हुङ्कारपूर्वमतटङ्कारनादमति पङ्कावधार्य चलिता।  
 लङ्काशिलोच्चयविशङ्का पदद्भिदुर शङ्काषयस्य धनुषः।  
 लङ्काधिपोमनुतयङ्कालरात्रिमिव शङ्काशताकुलधिया।



तङ्कालदण्डशत सङ्काशकार्मुख शराङ्कान्वितं भज हरिम्॥ २०॥

धीमानमेयतनुजापाण्डभूधशशजपांबुजाति सुहृदाम्।

कामारिपन्नगप कामाहि वैरिगुरु सोमादिवन्द्य महिम।

स्थेमादिनापगत सीमावतात्सखल सामाज रावणरिपू।

रामाभिदो हरिरभौमाकृतिः प्रतन सामादि वेदविषयः॥ २१॥

दोषात्मभूवशतुराषाडतिक्रमज दोषात्मभर्तृवचस।

पाषाणभूतमुनियोषावरात्मतनुवेशादिदायिचरणः।

नैषाधयोषिधसुभेषाकृदण्डजनि दोषाचरादि सुहृदो।

दोषाग्रजन्ममृतिशोषापहोऽवतु सुदोषाङ्घ्रिजातहननात्॥ २२॥

वृंदावनस्थपशु वृंदावनं विनुत वृंदारकैकशरणम्

नंदात्मजं निहत निंदा कृदा सुरजनन्दामबद्ध जठरम्

वन्दामहे वयम मन्दावदातरुचि मान्दाक्षकारिवदनम्।

कुन्दालिदन्तमुद कन्दासितप्रभतनुंदावराक्षसहरम्॥ २३॥

गोपालकोत्सवकृतापारभक्षरस सूपान्नलोपकुपिता।

शापालयापितलयापांबुदालिसलिलापायधारितगिरे।

सापाङ्गदर्शनजतापाङ्ग रागयुत गोपाङ्ग नांशुक हृति।

व्यापार शौण्डविविधापाय तत्स्वमव गोपारिजातहरण॥ २४॥

कंसादिकासदवतंसा वनीपतिविहिंसाकृतात्मजनुषम्

संसारभूतमिह संसारबद्धमन संसारचित्सुखतनुम्

संसाधयंतमनिशंसात्त्विकव्रतमहंसादरं बत भजे।

हंसादितापसरिरंसास्पदं परमहंसादि वन्द्य चरणं॥ २५॥

राजीव नेत्रविदुराजीवमामवतु राजीव केतनवशम्

वाजीभपत्तिनृभराजी रथान्वितज राजीव गर्वशमन।  
वाजीशवाहसित वाजीश दैत्य तनु वाजीश भेदकरदोः।  
जाजीकदंबनव राजीव मुख्यसुम राजीसुवासितशिरः॥ २६॥  
कालीहृदावसथ कालीयकुण्डलिप कालीस्थपादनखर।  
व्यालीनवांशुकर वालिगणारुणित कालीरुचे जय जय।  
केलीलवापहत कालिशदत्तवर नालीकतृप्तदितिभू।  
चूलीकगोपमहिलालीतनूघुसृणधूलीकणाङ्कहृदय॥ २७॥  
कृष्णादि पाण्डुसुत कृष्णा मनःप्रचुर तृष्णा सुत्रुप्तिकरवाक्  
कृष्णाङ्कपालिरत कृष्णाभिघाघहर कृष्णादिषण्महिळ भोः।  
पुष्णातु मामजित निष्णाद वार्धिमुद नुष्णांशु मण्डल हरे।  
जिष्णो गिरीन्द्र धर विष्णो वृषावरज घृष्णो भवान्करुणय॥ २८॥  
आमाशिरोमणिधरामासमेतबलरामानुजाभिधरतिम्।  
व्योमासुरांतकर ते मारतात दिशमे माधवाङ्घ्रिकमले।  
कामार्तभौमपुर रामावलीप्रणय वामाक्षिपीततनुभा।  
भीमाहिनाथमुखवैमानिकाभिनुत भिमाभिवन्द्य चरण॥ २९॥  
सक्ष्वेळभक्ष्यभय दाक्षिश्रवो गणज लाक्षेपपाशयमनम्।  
लाक्षागृहज्वलन रक्षो हिडिम्बबक भैक्षान्नपूर्वविपदः।  
अक्षानुबंधभवरूक्षाक्षरश्रवण साक्षान्महिष्यवमति।  
कक्षानुयानमधमक्षमापसेवनमभीक्ष्णापहासमसताम्॥ ३०॥  
चक्षाण एवनिज पक्षाग्रभूधशषदाक्षात्मजादि सुहृदाम्।  
आक्षेपकारिकुनृपाक्षौहिणीशजबलाक्षोभदीक्षितमनाः।  
ताक्षर्यासिचापशरतीक्ष्णारिपूर्वनिज लक्ष्माणिचाप्यगणयन्।

वृक्षालयध्वजरिरक्षाकरो जयति लक्ष्मीपतिर्यदुपतिः॥ ३१॥

बुद्धावतारकवि बद्धानुकंपकुरु बद्धाञ्जलौ मयि दयाम्

शौद्धोदनिप्रमुख सैद्धान्तिका सुगम बौद्धागमप्रणयन।

क्रुद्धाहितासुहृत्सिद्धासिखेटधर शुद्धाश्वयानकमला।

शुद्धान्तमांरुचिपि मद्धाखिलाङ्ग निज मद्धाव कल्क्यभिध भोः॥ ३२॥

सारङ्ग कृत्तिधर सारङ्ग वारिधर सारङ्ग राजवरदा।

सारङ्ग दारितर सारङ्ग तात्ममद सारङ्गतौषधबलम्।

सारङ्ग वत्कुसुम सारङ्ग तञ्चतव सारङ्ग माङ्घ्रियुगलम्

सारङ्ग वर्णमप सारङ्ग ताब्जमद सारङ्ग दिंस्त्वमव माम्॥ ३३॥

मन्गाला चरन

ग्रीवास्य वाहतनु देवाण्डजादिदश भावाभिराम चरितम्।

भावातिभव्यशुभ दीवादिराजयति भूवाग्विलास निलयम्।

श्रीवागधीशमुख देवाभिनम्य हरिसेवार्चनेषु पठताम्।

आवास एवभवितावाग्भवेतरसुरावासलोकनिकरे॥ ३४॥

## 25. ॥ दशावतारस्तोत्रम् ॥ (संस्कृत)

नमोऽस्तु नारायणमन्दिराय नमोऽस्तु हारायणकन्धराय ।

नमोऽस्तु पारायणचर्चिताय नमोऽस्तु नारायण् तेऽर्चिताय ॥

नमोऽस्तु मत्स्याय लयाब्धिगाय नमोऽस्तु कूर्माय पयोब्धिगाय ।

नमो वराहाय धराधराय नमो नृसिंहाय परात्पराय ॥२॥

नमोऽस्तु शक्राश्रयवामनाय नमोऽस्तु- विप्रोत्सव। भार्गवाय-

नमोऽस्तु सीताहितराघवा-य नमोऽस्तु पार्थस्तुता॥३॥यादवाय ॥-

नमोऽस्तु बुध्दाय विमोहकाय नमोऽस्तु ते कल्किमयोदिताय ।-  
 नमोऽस्तु पूर्णामितसद्गुणाय समस्ता॥४नाथाय हयाननाय ॥-  
 करस्थपुस्तकाय ।-मुद्राभय-प्रबोध-दक्षमाला-शङ्खोल्लस-  
 नमोऽस्तु वक्रोद्गिरि॥५हयाननाय ॥ दागमाय निरस्त हेयाय-  
 रमासमाकारच-तुष्टयेन क्रमाच्चतुर्दिक्षु निषेविताय ।  
 नमोऽस्तु पार्श्वव्ययग॥६द्विरूपश्रियाभिषिक्ताय हयाननाय ॥-  
 किरीटनूपुराद्यैः ।-सुरत्नपीतांबर-काञ्ची-हार-पद्माङ्गद-  
 विराजिताङ्गाय नमोऽस्तु तुभ्यं सुरैः परीताय हयाननाय ॥७॥  
 विमुक्तवन्द्याय नमोऽस्तु विश्वग्विधूत विघ्नाय-हयाननाय ।  
 नमोऽस्तु शिष्टेष्टद वादिराजकृताष्टकाभिष्टुता॥८चेष्टिताय ॥-  
 नमोऽस्तु शिष्टेष्टद वादिराजकृताष्टकाभिष्टुतचेष्टिताय ।-  
 दसावतारैः॥९बिंबस्थ हयाननाय ॥-स्त्रिदसार्थदाय निशेश-  
 ॥ इति वादिराजपूज्यचरणविरचितं दशावतारस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

## 26. ॥ दशावतार हरिगाथा ॥ (संस्कृत)

प्रलयोदन्वदुदीर्णनिविशागडम् ।-जलविहारा -  
 कमलाकान्त विभवाब्धिं -मण्डित -हरिमीडे ॥१॥  
 चरमागडोद्भृद्भितमन्दरतटिनं कूर्मशरीरम् ।-  
 कमलाकान्त॥२विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥ -तमण्डि -  
 सितकाश्यपतनयम् सूकररूपम् ।- दंष्ट्रोद्धत -  
 कमलाकान्त॥३विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥-मण्डित-  
 निशितसुरारिं नरसिंहम् ।- नखेन जित -प्राग्र -

कमलाकान्तविभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे - मण्डित - ॥४॥  
 त्रिपदभुवनं वामनरूपम् ।-चतुर्दश -व्याप्त -  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ ५ विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥ - मण्डित-  
 क्षपितनगधरं भार्गवरामम् ।- क्षत्रियवंश-  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ ६ मीडे ॥विभवाब्धिं हरि-मण्डित -  
 दयिताचोरनिपुणं राघवरामम् ।-निर्बर्हण-  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ ७ विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे - मण्डित-  
 मुरलीमो-निस्वन-हितवनितं यादवकृष्णम् ।  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ ८ विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥ - मण्डित-  
 पटुचाटिकृतजननं श्रीघनसंज्ञम् ।-निस्फुट -  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ ९ विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥ - मण्डित-  
 परिनिर्मूलितकुलं विष्णुयशोजम् ।-दुष्टजन -  
 कमलाकान्त ॥ १० विभवाब्धिं हरिमीडे ॥ - मण्डित -  
 अकृतेमां विजयध्वजवरतीर्थो हरिगाथाम् ।  
 अयते प्रीतिमलं सपदि यया श्रीरमणोयम् ॥११॥  
 ॥ इति श्री विजयध्वजतीर्थकृता दशावतारहरिगाथा समाप्ता ॥

## APPENDIX - B

### List of Daśāvatāra compositions in Marathi – (Devanāgarī)

- 1 Dinakarasvāmī (Svānubhavadinakara)
- 2 Eknātha (Abhanga No. 1, 2, 3, 4)
- 3 Eknātha (Daśāvatāra- āratī)
- 4 Eknātha (Daśāvatāra Nandī-gīta)
- 5 Eknātha (Goṇdhaḷa No. 1, 2)
- 6 Eknātha (Marīāī -gīta)
- 7 Eknātha (Paurāṇika Daśāvatāra)
- 8 Eknātha (Yallamā -gīta)
- 9 Janābāī (Daśāvatāra abhaṅga)
- 10 Nāmadeva (Abhaṅga No.1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- 11 Nāmadeva (Daśāvatāra -Sthāne)
- 12 Nāmadeva (Paurāṇika Daśāvatāra)
- 13 Samartha Rāmadāsa Swāmī (Śrī Manāce Śloka)
- 14 Someśvara-Mānasollāsa Gītī
- 15 Tukārāma (Daśāvatāra- kṛtī 1, 2)

## 1. श्री दिनकरस्वामी तिसगांवकर यांचे स्वानुभवदिनकर या ग्रंथातील दशावतार वर्णन

तवं ये रं देइजे प्रतिवचन। हमणे पितृसामर्थ्ये मज काय असे न्यून।  
तूं सदाचा भिकारी परतंत्र होऊन। दारोदारीं हिंडसी॥३२॥

तूं ब्राह्मणाचें होऊनि बाळ। बळीसी भीकमागूं गेलासी निखळ।  
शेवटीं जालासी द्वारपाळ। पाताळीं घालूनि तयासी॥३३॥

देवा मधुकैठभासी प्रसन्न जालासी। आणि त्याच्या मेदमांशें भूगोळ रचिसी।  
गरूडासी देऊनि वरदासी। स्वारी घातली तयावरी॥३४॥

प्रल्हादासी प्रसन्न होऊन। त्याचा पिता मारिला पोट चिरून।  
महिरावणाची नरडी दडपून। हनुमंताकरवी मारविला॥३५॥

पुरोचनाचें कपटें घर घेतले। त्याची स्त्री होऊनि त्यासी मारिलें।  
पोटा येऊनि कारागृहीं पीडिले। देवकीवसुदेवासी॥३६॥

अपराध नसतां मारिले वानर। पितयासी नरकपतन अघोर।  
आणि विश्वमारक जे निशाचर। त्यांसी बैसविले स्वपदीं॥३७॥

जिचिया पोटीं जन्मलासी। तिचिया केलें शिरछेदासी।  
स्तनपान द्यावया आली माउसी। ते शोषूनि मारिली॥३८॥

चोरी आणि परदारागमन। यांचे तुहमांसीमाहा भूषण।  
वृंदेसारिखी पतिव्रता सुलक्षण। व्रतभंग केला तयेचा॥३९॥

बाईल अग्नीमाजी लपऊन। व्यर्थ चि मारिले रावणादि ब्राह्मण।  
ऋषि पत्नीसी लाविला चरण। आणि स्त्री मारिली ताटिका॥४०॥

वानरहस्तीं तरले पाषाण। तेथें आपलें मिरवीतसां भूषण।  
आणि पूर्वजांवरी कानाडी (आकर्ण धनुष्यदोरी) वोढून। बाण टाकिला व्यर्थ  
चि॥४१॥

सुलोचनेसी प्रसन्न होऊन। बोलिलेत कीं इंद्रजीत उठवीन हमणौन।  
सेवटीं तें अवघेंचि आलें घडोन। आणि येकवचनी हे हाक त्रैलोकीं॥४२॥

तैसें चि आजि हि प्रसन्न होऊ आलेती। माग माग हमणौनि भोगीतसां महंती।  
आणि पव्हेसाठीं (पोहयासाठी) सुदामयाप्रति। दांत किरवितसां(?) कैसे ॥४३॥

दुर्वास ऋषीचें संकट जाणौन। द्रौपदी करी तुमचें स्मरण।  
तेथें भुकेलों हमणौनि भाजीचें पान। खातां लाज न वटे चि ॥४४॥

पुंडरीक हमणे जी धन्य देवा। ज्या ज्या तुहमीं केलिया अनंत मावा (माया)।  
तो तो तुमचा आठऊनि यावा (धैर्य)। हास्य कीं रुदन करावें ॥४५॥

तुहमीं इंद्राचे साहयतेकारणें। करूं आलेती माझिये छळणें।  
तरी माझें काय होणें। तुमचेनि द्याळा ॥४६॥

तथापि जरी तुहमी आलेती मजलागून। तरी मीं जें हमणेन ते तुहमीं करावें  
आपण।

ऐसें द्याल जरी भाषदान। तरी सांगेन सर्वथा ॥४७॥

देवें आइकतां चि पुंडरीकाचें वचन। तथास्तु म्हणौनि दिधलें भाषदान।  
येरु म्हणे उसटलिया (उच्छिष्ट) ध्यानाचें दर्शन। कदापि न घेणें आपणासी ॥४८॥

आणि म्यां जेव्हां तुजला पाहावें। तोंवरि तुवां येथें असावें।  
हें ठाकेल (हें वचन कायम राहिल तर) तरि येथें असावें।  
नाहीं तरि जाय स्वस्थानासी ॥४९॥

इतुकें बोलोनि पुंडलीक। देवें हमणतिलें अवश्यक।  
मग अंतरीं हमणौनि संम्यक। ध्यान धारणा धरीतसे ॥५०॥

जरि शृंगारेंसीं धरावें ध्यान। तरि कृष्णावतारींतो दाविला पूर्ण।  
वीररसें श्रीरामचंद्रध्यान। फरशराम रौद्ररसीं ॥५१॥

वामनावतार हास्यरसें। नृसिंह शोभे रसविभछें।  
वराहावतार अद्भुतरसें। शांतरसें कूर्मावतार ॥५२॥

मछावतारीं भयानकरस। एवं पाहतां खर्चले आठ हि रस।  
मग करुणारसें धरुनि निःशेष। पांडुरंगध्यान ॥५३॥

टाकूनि शंखचक्रगदापद्म। कटीं कर ठेविले निभ्रम।  
मस्तकींचा मुकुट ठेऊनि उत्तम। लिंग शोभे निजभाळीं ॥५४॥



विटेवरी समतापदें विराजमान। एसें निष्कळंक धरुनि पांडुरंगध्यान।  
पुंडलीकापाहे पां आता फिरोन। अनुछिष्टध्यान (पूर्वी कधीं हि न धारण केलेले)  
माझें॥५५॥

ऐकतां पुंडरीक मनीं विचारी। यासीपहावयाची कायसी तन्हीं थोरी।  
तथापि पाहतां पितृसेवेसी निर्धारीं। विन्घ वोडवेलयेखादें॥५६॥

हमणौनि सांगावया हें चि कारण। जगदीश जन्हीं आला आपण।  
तन्हीं पितृसेवा पुंडरीक न टाकीं हमणौन। तेथें जगदीश उभा अदयापि॥५७॥

हमणे दिनकररामदास। देवों गेलों पितृसेवेचियादृष्टांतास।  
तवं पांडुरंगमाहात्मकथेचिया सुखास। अकस्मात लाधलों॥५८॥

कीं ते वाराणसीचया पंचक्रोशामाझारीं।  
कुकुट (ज्याची मातृपितृभक्ति पाहून पुंडलीकजो पूर्वीद्रोही होता, तो भक्त  
झाला.)  
ब्राह्मण मातृपितृसेवाकरी।  
त्याचिया स्मरणमात्रें निर्धारी। दोष जाती जन्मांतरींचे॥५९॥

हमणौनि मायबापांचिये सेवेचा। येवढा महिमा असतां साचा।  
हा प्राणी त्याग करुनि तयांचा। करी सेवन स्त्रियेचे॥६०॥

स्वस्ति श्रीस्वानुभवदिनकरे। गुरुशिष्यान्वये।  
तृतीय वैराग्य कळापे। बाळतरूणावस्थावर्णन  
पांडुरंगमाहात्मकथानिरूपणं नाम। तृतीय कीर्णप्रकाशः॥  
(स्वानुभवदिनकर, कलाप-३, किरण-३)

## 2. श्री एकनाथ महाराज यांच्या अभंगांच्या गाथेतील दशावतार वर्णन

### रचना - १

एक बाळ ब्रह्मचारी। एक उदास निर्विकारी॥१॥  
एका शोभे पाशुपत। एका सुदर्शन झळकत॥२॥  
एका करीं पद्मगदा। एक परशु वाहे सदा॥३॥  
एसे परस्परें ते दोघे। शोभताती ब्रह्मानंदे॥४॥  
एका जनार्दनीं ध्याऊं। तया चरणीं लीन होऊ॥५॥

### रचना - २

वेदान् उध्दरते। मीनरुपेण जगन्निवहते।  
कच्छरुपेण भूगोल ते। पृथ्वी चक्रमुद्विभ्रामें ते॥१॥  
ऊर्ध्वधारयंते। हिरण्याक्ष दैत्य शोधियंते।  
दंतावरी पृथ्वी धारयंते। वराहरुपेण दैत्य मारियंते॥२॥  
दैत्य प्रल्हाद छळयते। स्तंभीं प्रगट रूपंते।  
हिरण्यकशिपु विदारयंते। नृसिंहरुपेण ते॥३॥  
बळी दैत्य छलयंते। क्षत्र निक्षत्र कुर्वंते।  
त्रिपाद पृथ्वी दान मागंते। वामनरुपेण दारंते॥४॥  
क्षत्रिय कुल नाशो कुर्वंते। जामदग्नीरेणुका उध्दरते।  
सहस्र अर्जुन दैत्य मारियंते। निःक्षत्रिय पृथ्वी कुर्वंते।  
परशुरामरुपेण॥५॥  
पौलस्ती रावण जयंते। सीता रत्न चोरियंते।  
रामरुपेण लंका हालायंते। रावण सहकुल वधियंते॥६॥  
द्वापारीं कलह कलहयंते। शिशुपाल वक्रदंत कंस  
ते। विध्वंसी रामभद्र रूपंते। करुणादया वृंद माते॥७॥  
म्लेंच्छ नित्यज्यान्मूर्छयते। विश्व बोधरुपेण ते।  
नाशयते कली रुपेण ते। एकाजनार्दन तया कृपे वर्णिते॥८॥

### रचना - ३

मच्छरुप धरुनी शंखासुर मारिला। तेव्हां श्रमोनी जंघनीं कर ठेविले॥१॥  
कूर्मरुप धरुनी पृथ्वी धरली पृष्ठींतेणें श्रमोनी कर ठेविले कटीं॥२॥  
हिरण्याक्ष मर्दुनीं दाडेवरी धरली अवनी। तेणें श्रमोनीकर धरिले जंघनीं॥३॥  
रक्षिला प्रह्लाद भक्त विदारिला क्रूर दैत्य। भागला तेणें कटावर कर मिरवत॥४॥

बळी पाताळी घातला द्वार राखतां श्रम जाला। म्हणोनी कटावरी कर ठेउनी राहिला॥५॥

एकविस वेळां निक्षत्री निर्वेर धरित्री। तेणें श्रमोनी कर जंघनी धरिले॥६॥  
लंकेपुढें वज्रठाण मांडिलें रावणातें भंगिलें। म्हणोनी कर जंघनी धरियेले॥७॥  
लागला काळयवन पाठीं पळतां जाला कष्टीं। म्हणोनी उभा येथें कर ठेउनी कटीं॥८॥

लोक देखोनी उन्मत्त दारा धनीं आसक्त। न बोले बौध्दरूप ठेविले जंघनीं हात॥९॥

पुढें म्लेंच्छ संहार म्हणोनी कर कटीं। एकाजनार्दनीं पाहतां चरणीं घातली मिठी॥१०॥

#### रचना - ४

वेद घेऊनियां गेला शंखासुर। मत्स्य अवतारजया लागीं॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज भिवरेचे तटीं। उभा जगजेठी विटेवरी॥२॥  
घेउनी अवतार वेद आणियेले। ब्रह्मीया स्थापिलें ब्रह्मपुरी॥३॥  
शंखासुर वधुनी विजयी पें झाला। वर्णितां पेंधाला जनार्दन॥४॥

इंद्राचे कैवारें कांसव पें झाला। देवघुसळितीपृष्ठीं भार वाहिला॥१॥  
तो हा महाराज विटे उभा नीट। भक्त तारावया केली पंढरी पेठ॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं रत्नें चौदा काढिलीं। देव सुरवर जेणें सुखी केले॥३॥

रसातळां जातां अवनी। घेतलें वराहरूप चक्रपाणी॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज पुंडलीकासाठीं। कर ठेउनी कटीं उभा विटे॥२॥  
हिरण्याक्ष वधुनी सुखी केलेदेव। एकाजनार्दनीं त्याचे पार्यो ठाव॥३॥

भक्त प्रह्लादाकारणें नरसिंह झाला। विदारुनि दैत्य स्तंभीं उद्भव केला॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज कर ठेऊनि कटीं। उभा राहिला अठ्ठाविस युगें पाठीं॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं भक्तकाज कैवारी। संहारुनी दैत्य वाढवी भक्तांची थोरी॥३॥

बळीचे द्वारीं आपण वामन झाला। इंद्राच्या कैवारें बळी पाताळीं घातिला॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज उभा विटेवरी। कर धरिले कटीं पाउलें दोन्ही साजिरीं॥२॥  
भक्ताचिया काजा विटे उभा राहिला। एकाजनार्दनीं देव डोळा पाहिला॥३॥

मातेच्या कैवारा सहस्र अर्जुन वधी। एकविस वेळां पृथ्वी निक्षत्रिय शोधी॥१॥  
तोचि मायबाप चंद्रभागे तीरीं। कर कटावरी ठेऊनि उभा॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं ज्याची कीर्ति वणितां। द्वैतहारपलें ममता देशधडी चिंता॥३॥

सीतेच्या कैवारे रावणा वधियला। जाऊनियां लंके बिभिषण स्थापिला॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज चंद्रभागे तीरीं। कट दोनी धरूनी उभा विटेवरी॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं रामनाम कीर्ति। त्याचें चरित्र ऐकतां समाधान वृत्ति॥३॥

द्वापारीं अवतार आठवा। कंसासुर वधियला श्रीकृष्ण साठवा॥१॥  
तोचि महाराज चंद्रभागे तटीं। उभा राहिलासे कर ठेऊनि कटीं॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं चरणीं पडली मिठी। आठवा आठवितां तुटे जन्मकोटि॥३॥

पुंडलिकाकारणें वाळुवटीं उभा। भक्ताच्याकैवारे दिसतसे शोभा॥१॥  
पुढें चंद्रभागावाहे अमृतमय। आषाढी कार्तिकीवैष्णवांची दाटी होय॥२॥  
एकाजनार्दनीं जया वैष्णव गाती। विठ्ठलनाम उच्चारितां सायुज्यमुक्ति॥३॥

कलंकी अवतार पुढें होईल श्रीहरी। लोपोनी जातां धर्म मग अवतार धरी॥१॥  
दहा अवतार भक्ताकारणें घेतो। भक्ताची आवडी हमणोनी गर्भवासा येतो॥२॥  
अंबऋषी कैवारे दहा अवतार घेतले। एकाजनार्दनीं त्याचें चरित्र वर्णिलें॥३॥  
(श्री एकनाथमहाराज यांच्या अभंगांची गाथा, गाथापंचक, गाथा तिसरी)

### 3. दशावतारांची आरती

आरती सप्रेम जय जय विठ्ठल परब्रम्हा।  
भक्तसंकटीं नानास्वरूपीं स्थापिसि स्वधर्मा॥धु॥

अंबऋषीकारणे गर्भवास सोशीसी।  
वेद नेले चोरुनि ब्रम्हया आणुनियां देसी।  
मत्स्यरूपीं नारायणा सप्तहि सागर धुंडीसी।  
हस्त लागतां शंखासुरा वर देसी॥१॥

रसातळासी जातां पृथ्वी पाठीवर घेसी।  
परोपकारासाठीं देवा कांसव झालासी।  
दाढे धरूनी पृथ्वी नेतां वराहरूप होसी।  
प्रल्हादाकारणें नरहरीं स्तंभी गुरगुरसी॥२॥

पांचवे अवतारीं बळिच्या द्वाराला जासी।  
भिक्षे स्थळ मागुनी बळीला पाताळा नेसी।  
सर्व समर्पण केले म्हणुनि प्रसन्न होसी।

वामनरूप धरूनी बळिच्या द्द्वारीं तिष्ठसी॥३॥

सहस्त्रार्जुन मातला जमदग्नीचा वध केला।  
कष्टी ते रेणुका म्हणुनी सहस्त्रार्जुन वधिला।  
निःक्षत्री पृथ्वी दान दिधली विप्रांला।  
सहावा अवतार परशुराम प्रकटला॥४॥

मातला रावण सर्वा उपद्रव केला।  
तेहतीस कोटी देव बंदी हरिलें सीतेला।  
पितृवचनालागी रामें वनवास केला।  
मिळोनि वानरसहित राजाराम प्रगटला॥५॥

देवकीवसुदेवबंदीमोचन त्वां केले।  
नंदाघरी जा ऊन निजसुख गोकुळा दिधलें।  
गोरसचोरी करिता नवलक्ष गोपाळ मिळविले।  
गोपिकांचे प्रेम देखुनि श्रीकृष्ण भुलले॥६॥

बौद्ध कलंकी कलियुगिं अधर्म हा अवघा।  
सांडुनि नित्य धर्म सोडुनि संतांची सेवा।  
म्लेंच्छमर्दन करिसी म्हणुनि कलंकि केशवा।  
बहिरवि जान्हवि द्यावी निजसुखानंदसेवा॥७॥  
(श्री एकनाथ महाराज)

#### 4. एकनाथी भारुड

नंदी आला नंदी आला। स्वर्ग पाताळाहुनि नंदी आला।  
कैलासाहुनि नंदी आला। गुबु गुबु गुबु॥  
कोण्या सदैवाच्या वाड्यांत। नंदी चालला सांगावया मात।  
नरनारी कवतुकें पाहात। गुबु गुबुगुबु॥  
दहा अवतार घरटी करी। काशी अयोध्या मथुरेंत फेरी।  
नाचतो हरिदासाचे द्द्वारीं। शिव हर हर बोला॥  
चार युगें नव खंडें। खेळविलीं अमित ब्रह्मांडें।  
मच्छकूर्मादि उदंडें। अवतारलीला दावितो॥  
हिरण्यकश्यपाचे द्द्वारीं। महाभयंकर फुसफुस करी।  
शिं गें रोविली उरीं। प्रल्हादाकारणें॥

रावण कुंभकर्णाचे घरा। क्रोधें गेला नंदीचा फेरा।  
 त्यांचा केला चाराचुरा। शरणागताकारणें॥  
 गोकुळांत केली फेरी। कंसासुर शिंगें मारी।  
 कौरव जरासंधादि वैरी। केली बोहरी तयांची॥  
 कृष्णावतारापर्यंत अशा लीला दाखविणारा तोच अनाद्यनन्त नंदी नाथांना  
 आपल्या काळात भीमातटाकी गवसला :  
 विश्रांतीस आला दिंडीरवना। तो निजसखा पुंडलीक जाणा।  
 तयाची आवड देखोनि मना। भीमातटीं खेळतसे॥  
 खेळ खेळला परिपूर्ण। श्रमोनी धरिले कटिं कर जाण।  
 शरण एका जनार्दन। मीतूपण त्यजोनी॥  
 गुबु गुबु गुबु  
 (श्री एकनाथी भारुड, भाग २रा)

## 5. श्री एकनाथ महाराज यांच्या अभंगांच्या गाथेतील गोंधळ - १

निर्गुण निराकारे आदिमाते मूळाधारे वो।  
 अलक्ष सर्वेश्वरी चिदानंद अपरंपार वो।  
 ब्रह्मतेजाकार महा कारण आकार वो।  
 अंबऋषी कैवारें नाम संसाराचे तारूं वो॥१॥  
 उदो बोला उदो बोला वैष्णवी माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 शिवेवर दिधला असुर शंकासुर मातला वो।  
 चतुरानन गांजिला वेद चारी घेउनी गेला वो।  
 सुरपति त्रासिला तो तुजला शरण आला वो।  
 तो त्वां सिध्दि नेला मीन रूपीं वध केला वो॥२॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो मच्छाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 सुरासुरांचे काळीं अवनीं अहंकारें दाटली वो।  
 शेषे पृथ्वी धरली तंव ती पाताळीं चालिली वो।  
 ऐसें त्वां देखता अंबे तुज करुणा आली वो।  
 तें त्वां कच्छरूपें पृथ्वी पृष्ठीवरी वाहाली वो॥३॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो कुर्माई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 असुर कुळीं मागुती मिळोनि केला अवनी भार वो।  
 मगर कूर्म भागले जाणोनि घेसी तूं कैवार वो।  
 अभिनव लीला तुझी केला सकळांचा संहार वो।  
 तें त्वां सूकररूपें दाढ लावूनि दिधला धीर वो॥४॥

उदो म्हणा उदो व्हाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 असुरकुळीं जन्मला भक्त प्रल्हाद बोधिला वो।  
 छंद तुझा लागला देखोनि पितयानें गांजिला वो।  
 नामीं निर्भर झाला तैं त्वां स्तंभीं उध्दव केला वो।  
 दैत्य जानूवरी हिरण्यकशिपु विदारिला वो॥५॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो नरसाई मउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 भेदोनि सुरनर लोक असुर गर्वीं झाला बळी वो।  
 सुरपति शरण आला म्हणे राहे महीतळीं वो।  
 तैं त्वां वामनरूपें पृथ्वी तीन पदें व्यापिली वो।  
 त्रिविक्रमाच्या रूपें त्वां बळी दडपिले पाताळीं वो॥६॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो वामनाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 भृगुऋषींचे कुळीं माते रेणुकेचेउदरीं वो।  
 अवतार घेतला परशुराम तूं सुंदरी वो।  
 सहस्त्रार्जुन मारिला तो मातेच्या कैवारी वो।  
 पृथ्वी एकवीस वेळां फिरुनि निक्षत्रिय संहारी वो॥७॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो परसाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 पहातां परात्पर पूर्ण रामाई अवतार वो।  
 वनवासाच्या मिषें केला दुष्टांचा संहार वो।  
 भानुकुळीं नांदसी नामें संसाराचें तारूं वो।  
 वधोनियां दशकंठ राज्यीं स्थापिला किंकरू वो॥८॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो रामाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 नंद यशोदे घरीं गोंधळ गोकुळामाझारी वो।  
 अनंत लीला खेळशी तूं कान्हाई सुंदरी वो।  
 बाळपर्णी मारिला मामा कंसासुर वैरी वो।  
 पांडव करूनी पुढें भार पृथ्वीचा उतरी वो॥९॥  
 उदो म्हणा उदो कृष्णाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 बोधोनी सकळही लोका बोधें नेलें त्रिविधताप वो।  
 बौध्दरूपें नांदसी बोलेविना बोलणें एक वो।  
 साधक बाधक जेथें एकपर्णेची अनेक वो।  
 बोध्दे अवतार तुझ्या बोधाविण बोधविसी वो॥१०॥  
 उदो हमणा उदो बोधाई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
 नाम कलंकी माता वेदा दावी साक्षेपता वो।  
 भिन्नपर्णे भाविता भिन्न भिन्न चढे हातां वो।  
 व्यापक जे भाविती मजमाजीची तत्वता वो।

कुटिलपणें खेळसी भूली घालुनी फिरवी चित्ता वो॥११॥  
उदो हमणा उदो कल्काई माउलीचा वो॥धु॥  
एकचि माउली दहा अवतार खेळली वो।  
पाहतां गुरुवचनीं मज माजीच बिंबली वो।  
हरुनि त्रिविधताप साधुजनाला उध्दरी वो।  
एकाजनार्दनीं सहजीं सहजें ऐक्या आली वो।  
उदो म्हणा उदो दसविध माउलींचा वो॥धु॥१२॥

### श्री एकनाथ महाराज यांच्या अभंगांच्या गाथेतील गोंधळ - २

नमो निर्गुण निराकार। आदि मूळ माया तूं आकार।  
महालक्ष्मी तूं साचार। उघडे द्वार ठेउनी बैसलीस बया॥१॥  
बया दार लाव। बया दार लाव।॥धु॥

घेउनी दहा अवतार। करिसी दुष्टांचा संहार।  
आकार सारुनी निराकार। काय बैसलीस  
बया दार लाव॥२॥

बैसलीस क्षीरसागरीं। शेषाचे पलंगावरी।  
जय विजय द्वारीं। प्रेम दिवटे तिष्ठती  
बया दार लाव॥३॥

ते वेळीं देव आले। शंखासुरें हमणती पीडिलें।  
वेदचारी चोरुनि नेले। ब्रह्मियाचे  
बया दार लाव॥४॥

त्वां मत्स्यरूप धरून। समुद्रांत बुडी देऊन।  
शंखासुरास वधून वेद घेउनी आलीस  
बया दार लाव॥५॥

सुर असुर मिळाले। समुद्र घुसळावया गेले।  
वासुकीचें दांवे लाविलें। तेथें संकटीं पडिले  
बया दार लाव॥६॥

तूं कूर्म रूप धरून। मंदराचळ पृष्ठीं वाहून।  
चवदा रत्नें काढून। इंद्र सुखी केला



बया दार लाव॥७॥

वरदे हिरण्याक्ष माजला। पृथ्वी काखेस घेउनी पळाला।  
चंद्र सूर्य घेउनी गेला। अंधःकार पडिला  
बया दार लाव॥८॥

त्वां वराह रूप धरून। दैत्यास क्रोधें वधून।  
पृथ्वी दाढेवरी धरून। चंद्र सूर्य आणिला  
बया दार लाव॥९॥

दैत्य कुळीं हिरण्यकश्यपु जन्मला। तेणें तुझा भक्त गांजिला।  
तें न पहावें तुजला। त्वां उग्र रूप धरिलें  
बया दार लाव॥१०॥

त्वां क्रोधें स्तंभ फोडून। नारसिंह रूप धरून।  
दैत्यासी वधून। प्रल्हाद दिवटा रक्षिला  
बया दार लाव॥११॥

दैत्य कुळीं बळीं जन्मला। तेणें पुण्याचा उत्कर्ष केला।  
देखोनी इंद्र घाबरला। शरण आला बया तुज  
बया दार लाव॥१२॥

वामन रूप धरून। बळीस पाताळीं घालून।  
शुक्राचा एक नयन। फोडिलास  
बया दार लाव॥१३॥

सहस्र अर्जुनें पीडिलें। देवा तेणें गांजिलें।  
ऋषीचे याग खोळंबले। हे न पाहावे तुझेनी  
बया दार लाव॥१४॥

मग तूं परशुराम रूप धरून। सहस्र अर्जुनास वधून।  
मातेचें शिर छेदून। क्षत्रीय कुळ निवटिलें  
बया दार लाव॥१५॥

शिव वरदे रावण कुंभकर्ण। तेहतीस कोटी बंदी घालून नवग्रह पायरी करून।  
राज्य करी आनंदें।  
बया दार लाव॥१६॥

सीतेचेनी कैवारें। रावण मारिला सहपरिवारें।  
अठरा पद्म वानरें। गोंधळ मांडिला लंकेसी।  
बया दार लाव॥१७॥

कौरव पांडव मिळाले। कुरुक्षेत्री युध्द मांडिलें।  
अठरा अक्षोहिणी दिवटे भले। नाचती रणकल्लोळीं।  
बया दार लाव॥१८॥

बौद्ध अवतार घेऊन। विटे समचरण ठेऊन।  
पुंडलीक दिवटा पाहून। तयाचे द्वारीं गोंधळ मांडिला  
बया दार लाव॥१९॥

आणिक दिवटे अपार। निवृत्ती ज्ञानदेव सोपान खचर।  
मुक्ताई जनाबाई विसोबा गोरा कुंभार। रोहीदास चोखा सज्जन नाचती  
बया दार लाव॥२०॥

सांवता नामा दामा जाण। नारा मादा गोंदा विठा कबीर कमाल पूर्ण।  
सेना जनमित्र नरसी ब्राह्मण। दिवटे तिष्ठती  
बया दार लाव॥२१॥

आषाढीं कार्तिकीं गोंधळ मांडिला। उदो उदो ऐसा शब्द झाला।  
कामक्रोधादिकां पळ सुटला। उदो शब्द ऐकोनी।  
बया दार लाव॥२२॥

पुढे कलीचा प्रथम चरण। दैवतें राहिलीं लपून।  
तीर्थे सांडोनी महिमान। अठरा वर्ण एक झाले।  
बया दार लाव॥२३॥

मच्छ गांजिले देवभक्तां। महिमा उच्छेदिला सर्वथा।  
न चले जप तप तत्वता। एक रूप सर्व झालें  
बया दार लाव॥२४॥

मत्स्याई बया दार लाव।  
कुर्माई बया दार लाव बया।  
वन्हाई बया दार लाव बया।  
नरसाई बया दार लाव बया।

वामनाई बया दार लाव बया।  
परसाई बया दार लाव बया।  
रामाई बया दार लाव बया।  
कृष्णाई बया दार लाव बया।  
बौद्धाई बया दार लाव बया।  
कलंकाई बया दार लाव बया।  
महालक्ष्मी दार लाव बया॥२५॥  
उदे उदे उदे बया दार लाव॥२६॥

काम महिषासुर मातला। तेणें विषय गोंधळ मांडिला।  
अज्ञान पोत पाजळला। आशा संबळा लाउनी  
बया दार लाव॥२७॥

क्रोध वेताळ दारुण। मातलासे मदें करून।  
मत्सर मद साहय होऊन। भक्ती वैराग्य बुडविलें  
बया दार लाव॥२८॥

दंभ झेटिंग महाबळी। अहंकार मुंज्या छळी।  
आशा मनशा तृष्णा घेउनी गोंधळी विषय कल्लोळीं नाच तूं।  
बया दार लाव॥२९॥

कल्पना इच्छा वासना भूतावळीं। औट कोटिया मिळाली।  
नाचती विषय कल्लोळीं। भोग दिवटी घेउनी  
बया दार लाव॥३०॥

ऐसें तुज न पहावें जाण। हमणोनी बैसलीस मौन धरून।  
विटेवरी समचरण ठेऊन। निवांत रूपें  
बया दार लाव॥३१॥

एका जनार्दनीं शरण। विठ्ठलनामें अंबा जाण।  
पुंडलीक दिवटा अवलोकुन। निवांत रूपें बैसली  
बया दार लाव॥३२॥

संत एकनाथांचं मरीआई गीत  
चारी पुरुष प्रसंगी घालुनी,  
निरंजनीं पुंडलीकाचे द्वारी बैसोनी,

भक्ति पुरस्कारोनी, निवांत देखिलीं...  
मच्छे कच्छे, व्हारें, नारसिंह, वानें परसें,  
रामें, कृष्णे, बौद्धें, कळंकिये...

## 7. पौराणिक दशावतार

वेद नेतां शंखासुरीं। मत्स्य अवतार होय हरी॥१॥  
मारुनियां शंखासुरा। ब्रह्मया तोषविलेंनिर्धारें॥२॥  
रसातळा जातां अवनी। तळीं कांसव चक्रपाणी॥३॥  
काढोनियां चौदा रत्नें। गौरविला सुरभूषण॥४॥  
हिरण्याक्षें नेतां धरा। आपण सूकर पै जाहला॥५॥  
मारुनियां दैत्यासी। सुखी केलें देवांसीं॥६॥  
प्रह्लादाकारणें। स्तंभामाजी गुरगुरणें॥७॥  
धरुनियां जानूवरी। वधिला हिरण्यकश्यपु निर्धारिं॥८॥  
इंद्राच्या कैवारें धावून। रूप धरिलें वामन॥९॥  
बळी पाताळीं घातिळ। आपण द्वारपाळ जाहला॥१०॥  
सहस्त्रार्जुनें पीडिलें। आपण परशराम जाहले॥११॥  
पितृआज्ञा मानुनी खरी। माता वधिली निर्धारिं॥१२॥  
सीतेचें करुनी मीस। केला राक्षसांचा नाश॥१३॥  
चौदा वर्षे वनांतरी। वनवास सेवी हरी॥१४॥  
वसुदेव देवकीसाठीं। अवतार धरिला पोटीं॥१५॥  
मारुनियां कंसासुर। उतरिला मेदिनीचा भार॥१६॥  
येऊनियां पंढरपुरा। धरिला विटेवरी थारा॥१७॥  
पुंडलिकासाठीं उभा। एकाजनार्दनी शोभा॥१८॥  
(श्री एकनाथमहाराज यांच्या अभंगांची गाथा, गाथापंचक, गाथा तिसरी, भाग  
४था)

## 8. यल्लमा गीत

यल्लमा आली यल्लमा आली, मच्छरूपी  
यल्लमा आली  
शंखासुराचे वधासी गेली, चारी वेद घेऊन  
आली

माता माझी यल्लमा भली....  
 धरा रसातळाशी चालली, कूर्मेरूपे  
 यल्लमा आली  
 माझे बयेने धरली, जयदेवी अंबा स्थापिली  
 अंबा वराहरूप होऊन क्षिती दाढेवर धरून  
 दैत्य अघोर बघून, करिती भक्तांचे पालन...  
 अंबा नारसिंहरूप होऊन, स्तंभामाजी गुरगुरून  
 हिरण्यकश्यपाचा घेतला प्राण, भक्त  
 प्रल्हादाकारणें...  
 अंबा झालीसे कृतघ्न, बया बैसली कपार लावून  
 मंजुळ बोले हास्यवदन, अष्टभुजा सौभाग्य  
 जाण  
 दार उघडून पाहे वदन...  
 वामन रूपे अंबा होऊन, बसली पाताळीं घालून  
 द्वारपाळ पुन्हा राहून शुक्र गुरूचा डोळा फोडून  
 दातृत्व भक्त जाण..  
 अंबा परशराम होऊन, कामधेनू आली घेऊन  
 रेणुकाचा वध करून, आपल्या पित्याची आज्ञा  
 पाळून...  
 अंबा झाली असे राम, लंका बिभीषणा स्थापून  
 इंद्रजिताचा घेतला प्राण, अंबा सुवेळी नाचून  
 अंबेने केले रणकंदन...  
 देवकीचे उदरा जाऊन, गर्भवासी अंबा जाऊन  
 कंसाहाती गेली निसटून, गोकुळी केले आगमन  
 अंबा शेषावरी करी शयन, करी येश्वदेचे  
 स्तनपान  
 करी कंसाचे छेदन...  
 अविनाश पंढरी जाण, अंबेने पाहिले दिंडीवन  
 भक्त पुंडलिकाकारण, समचरण कटीं ठेवून  
 दृष्टी नासाग्री ठेवून, न्याहाळिती भक्तजन  
 बौद्धरूप अंबा जाण...  
 अंबा दशभुजा नटली, दैत्य दानव मारून आली  
 कलिरूप प्रगट झाली, जळमय करू गेली  
 चंद्रसूर्यासी आज्ञा दिली, वटपात्री शयनीं झाली

त्रिविधताप अंबा माउली, एका जनार्दनी अंबा  
पाहिली...

### 9. जनाबाईचे अभंग (दशावतार वर्णन)

ऐसा हा देवानें थोर पवाडा केला। पूर्व अवतारीं झाला हयग्रीव॥१॥  
मग अंबाकृषीसाठीं पडियेला संकटीं। मच्छ झाला पोटीं समुद्राच्या॥२॥  
होउनी कच्छप पर्वत धरिला। वराहें मारिला दैत्यभार॥३॥  
तयाचा सहोदर मृत्यु नाहीं ऐसा वर। तेव्हां अवतार नारसिंह झाला॥४॥  
अर्धनारी नटेश्वर दुसरा तो वामन। भार्गव तो निधान दाशरथी॥५॥  
होऊनिया कृष्ण कंस वधियेला। आतां बुध्द झाला सखा माझा॥६॥  
लीला अवतारीं हरि करी खेळ नाना। म्हणे जनी जाणा तें मी होत्यें॥७॥  
(श्री संत नामदेव महाराज यांची अभंगांची गाथा, भाग ६वा)

### 10. श्री संत नामदेव महाराज यांचे अभंग

रचना - १

अवताराची राशी तो हा उभा विटेवरी। शंखचक्रगदापद्मसहित करीं॥१॥  
देखिला देखिला देवा आदिदेव बरवा। समाधान जीवा पाहतां वाटे गे माये॥२॥  
सगुण चतुर्भुज रूपडें तेज पुंजाळती। वंदी चरणरज नामा विनवी पुढती गे  
माये॥३॥

रचना - २

भक्तांसाठीं देव अवतार धरी। कृपाळु श्रीहरि साच खरा॥१॥  
तो हा महाराज चंद्रभागे तीरीं। उभा विटेवरी पांडुरंग॥२॥  
ब्रह्मयाचे वेद चोरी शंखासुर। मत्स्य अवतार तयालार्गी॥३॥  
समुद्रमंथनीं मंदर बुडाला। कूर्मरूप झाला तये वेळीं॥४॥  
हिरण्याक्ष धरा नेतां रसातळा। वराहरूपें त्याला वधियेलें॥५॥  
प्रल्हादासी पिता गांजी नानापरी। स्तंभीं नरहरी प्रगटला॥६॥  
देवकार्जी झाला वामन भूतळीं। बळीसी पाताळीं घातियेला॥७॥  
भूमिभार झाला क्षत्रियांचे कुळ। केलेंसे निर्मूळ परशुरामें॥८॥  
सीतेचिया काजा रावण मर्दिला। सूर्यवंशी झाला रामचंद्र॥९॥  
गोकुळीं जन्मला श्रीकृष्ण आठवा। होऊनि पांडवां साह्यकारी॥१०॥  
व्रतभंगासाठीं बौद्ध अवतार। झाला दिगंबर अवनिये॥११॥

कलंकि अवतार होणार श्रीहरि। तेव्हां पृथ्वीवरी तृण न उरे॥२॥  
नामा म्हणे ज्याचे अनंत अवतार। काय मी पामर बोलूं वाचे॥१३॥

### रचना - ३

देवा तूं प्रथम कर्म भोगिसी। सागरीं जळचरु मत्स्य झालासी।  
कर्मठ पाठी नसंडी कैसी। कूर्मे कासाविसी केलें तुज॥१॥  
अपवित्र नाम आदि वराह। याहूनि थोर कूर्म कांसव।  
अर्ध सावज अर्ध मानव। हे भवभाव कर्माचे॥२॥  
खुजेपणें बळीस पाताळीं घातलें। तेणें कर्म तयाचें द्वार रक्षिलें।  
पितयाचे वचनें मातेसी वधिलें। तें कर्म जोडलें परशुरामा॥३॥  
श्रीरामा झाल्या आपदा बहुता। कर्म भोगविलें अंतरली सीता।  
भालुका तीर्थी वधियलें अवचिता। नाम अच्युता तुज झालें॥४॥  
ऐसा कष्टी होऊनि बौद्ध राहिलासी। तूं कलंकिया लोकां मारिसी।  
आपल्या दोषासाठीं आणिकां दंडिसी। निष्कळंक होसी नारायणा॥५॥  
ऐसा तूं बहुता दोषी बांधिलासी। पुढिलाचि जन्में अवगतोसी।  
विष्णुदास नामा म्हणे हृषीकेशी। तुझी भीड कायसी स्वामियाहो॥६॥

### रचना - ४

प्रथम अवतारीं देव मच्छ झाले सागरीं। वधोनि शंखासुर वैरी आणिले वेद॥१॥  
कूर्म अवतारीं सांवरीली सृष्टी। वराहद्विज नेहटी धरणीधरू॥२॥  
प्रल्हाद कैवारा स्तंभाभीतरीं। बळी बंधन हरी प्रगट झाला॥३॥  
रेणुकानंदन द्विजकुळ पाळण। त्रिंबकभजन रघुनाथ॥४॥  
गोकुळीं अवतारू सोळा सहस्त्र वरू। आपण योगेश्वरू बौध्यरूपीं॥५॥  
कल्की अवतारू वदतसे वरू। नामया दातारू केशिराज॥६॥

### रचना - ५

मत्स्य कच्छ क्रीड मृग ते खुजट। जेथूनि प्रगट झालीं रूपें॥१॥  
तेंचि ब्रह्म उभें भींवरेच्या तीरीं। हात कटावरी ठेवूनियां॥२॥  
मातृघाती हिंडे वर्नी जो रडत। चोर जार घात करी दुष्ट॥३॥  
दिगंबर अश्वारूढ खड्गधारी। पृथ्वीचा जो करी ग्रास एक॥४॥  
नामा म्हणे मुंगी आदिब्रह्मवरी। नाना अवतारीं एकलाचि॥५॥  
(श्री संत नामदेव महाराज यांची अभंगांची गाथा, श्रीविठ्ठलाची भक्तवत्सलता)

## 11. दश अवतार स्थाने

होसी भक्तांचा कोंवसा। तुझीं ब्रीदें हृषीकेशा।  
निवविलें सायासा। कृपासिंधु मुरारी॥१॥

अंबऋषीकारणें। दहा वेळ गर्भवासा येणें।  
अवतार धरिला नारायणें। गजापूर नगरीं॥२॥

अंदुरायाच्या घरीं। बाळ जळसेनाच्या कुमरीं।  
मत्स्यरूप अवतार धरी। वेद हरणकैवारी नारायण॥३॥

विद्यापूर नगरीं। अंधरुराजा राज्य करी।  
श्रियादेवी त्या सुंदरी। उदरीं कुमरु जन्मला॥४॥

पृथ्वी रसातळवटीं। जातां थोर अंदोळली सृष्टी।  
धांवण्या धांवले जगजेठी। धरा पृष्ठीं सांवरिली॥५॥

मर्गजपुरीं पुरपती। हिरण्याक्ष चक्रवर्ती।  
अग्नि असे जनवंती। घरीं बाळ वराह॥६॥

त्रिदशदेवश्रिया चाडा। हिरण्याक्ष वधिला गाढा।  
भूगोल धरूनियां दाढा। केला निवाडा स्वर्गींचा॥७॥

कर्पूरपुरपाटण। हरिभक्तीचें हें स्थान।  
सदयादेवी प्रिया नंदन। उदरीं नृसिंह जन्मला॥८॥

पित्या पुत्रा झाली कळी। स्तंभीं प्रगटला तये वेळीं।  
असुर मारिला करकमळीं। भक्त प्रल्हाद रक्षिला॥९॥

कश्यपनंदनवर्धन। कोंवळादशाचा वामन।  
खुजट रूप धरून। महेंद्रपुरीसी आला॥१०॥

दानें तपें व्रतें बळी। तोही घातला पाताळीं।  
अद्यापि राहिला जवळीं। चरणतळीं पद देउनी॥११॥

रेणापुरीं देवी रेणुका। लाधली जमदग्नीस देखा।  
तिचे उदरीं विश्वतारका। परशुराम जन्मला॥१२॥



असुरीं वधियेली माया। म्हणे धांवें पुत्रराया।  
अवचित पातला धांवया। सहस्त्रार्जुन मारिला॥१३॥

अयोध्या नाम नगरी। जन्म कौसल्ये उदरीं।  
देवभक्तांचा कैवारी। दशरथनंदन राघव॥१४॥

राम त्रैलोक्यीं वीर दारुण। तेणें वधियेला रावण।  
अढळपद देऊन। राज्यीं बिभीषण स्थापिला॥१५॥

मथुरा नामें नगरीं। वसुदेव देवकी उदरीं।  
कृष्ण आठवा अवतारी। लीलाविग्रही जन्मले॥१६॥

कंस चाणूर मर्दिले। विमळार्जुन उन्मळिले।  
सप्त गर्भांचे सूड घेतले। रक्षिलें गाईगोपाळां॥१७॥

बौद्ध श्रीवत्साच्या घरीं। जन्म शांभवीच्या उदरीं।  
राजा कांतिये नगरीं। निरंतर रूपें राहिला॥१८॥

ध्यानमुद्रा मांडूनीयां। वस्त्रें शस्त्रें त्यजूनीयां।  
राहिला पें निरंजनिया। भक्तिभाव ओळखे तो॥१९॥

कल्कि जसरायाचा पुत्र। सावित्री देवीचा कुमर।  
शंभलापुरीं करील अवतार। दाही रूपें प्रगटला॥२०॥

ऐसा अमूर्तमूर्ति विटेवर। उभा राहिला निरंतर।  
विष्णुदास नाम्याचा दातार। वर विठ्ठल पंढरीये॥२१॥  
(श्री संत नामदेव महाराज यांची अभंगांची गाथा)

## 12. पौराणिक कथानकें (दशावतार वर्णन)

मीनरुप झाला प्रथम तो हरी। ज्याचा चराचरीं वास होता॥१॥  
मार्कंडेयालागीं दाखविली माया। वटपत्रीं तया रूपासी हो॥२॥  
बाळमुकुंदानें स्वरूप दावितां। श्वासोच्छ्वास घेतां चौदा कल्प॥३॥  
पाहोनियां माया अंतरीं निमाला। घाबरा तो झाला ऋषिराज॥४॥  
आशवासून तया दाखविली माया। धन्य देवराया नामा म्हणे॥५॥

उदकीं बुडतां क्षिति तारियेली। भूतें सरियलीं दाढेवरी॥१॥  
अद्यापि तूं होसी ऐसा हृषीकेशी। धरुनि मारिसी बळिवंत॥२॥  
नामा म्हणे धन्य अघटित करणी। दाढेसी धरुनि वराह तूं॥३॥

प्रह्लादाकारणें स्तंभीं अवतार। भक्त राजेश्वर म्हणताती॥१॥  
जळीं स्थळीं आहे सर्वां ठायीं हरी। प्रत्यक्ष तूं न्याहारी स्तंभामार्जी॥२॥  
ऐकतांचि वाणी क्रोधासी चढला। खड्ग तो काढिला कोशांतून॥३॥  
तये काळीं हाक मारिली प्रचंड। फोडिलें ब्रह्मांड नरसिंहें॥४॥  
धरुनियां दैत्य वेगीं मांडीवरी। नखानें तो चिरी पोट त्याचें॥५॥  
जयजयकार झाला ब्रह्मादि पातला। इंद्रादिक आला देवांसहित॥६॥  
करुनियां स्तुति देव शांतविला। प्रल्हाद तो झाला पूर्ण भक्त॥७॥  
नमाया हो झाली मायबाप भेटी। लाभ उठाउठी आनंदाचा॥८॥

बळीराजा दैत्य बहुत मातला। संपत्ति हरिल्या देवांचिया॥१॥  
तयाकाळीं जे जे देव आठविती। प्रार्थना करिती देवदेवा॥२॥  
तयाकाळीं तुवां अदिती उदरीं। अवतारधारी बटु झाला॥३॥  
छळूनियां बळी पाताळीं घातला। आपण राहिला तया द्वारीं॥४॥  
देव देवपदीं बैसवूनि सारे। राखीतसे द्वार नामा म्हणे॥५॥

मारावया राजे ब्राह्मणाचे घरीं। रेणुकाजठरीं अवतार॥१॥  
करुनियां पृथ्वी निःक्षत्रिय बहु वेळां। दान ते सकळां विप्रां दिली॥२॥  
खुंटविला चिरंजीव अद्यापि तो आहे। आत्मरुपीं पाहे निजानंदीं॥३॥  
दाशराथी रामा झाला समागम। तेणें एक बाण दिल्हा म्हणे नामा॥४॥

दशरथ राजा संतान तें नाहीं। म्हणोनियां पाही ऋषेश्वरीं॥१॥  
करुनि विनंति पुत्रेष्टी हे केली। पुरोडांश भक्षिली पत्नियांनीं॥२॥  
तपाच्या सामर्थ्ये पुत्र चार झाले। अविनाश झाले अवतारासी॥३॥  
रघुपति रामें पूर्ण मुसावलें। चैतन्य प्रगटलें कौसल्येसी॥४॥  
तेणें केली ख्याति राक्षस मारिले। रामराज्य केलें त्रैलोक्यांत॥५॥  
नामा म्हणे मज नाम गोड आहे। त्यालागीं तूं पाहे विचारुनी॥६॥

श्रीकृष्ण लीलामृत बाणतांचि गोडी। कथेचि वरपडी आवडती॥१॥  
तयाचा विस्तार तोचि बोलविता। आहे सर्व सत्ता त्याचे हातीं॥२॥  
येथें मी पामर काय बोलूं वाणी। दिसे किविलवाणी संतांपुढें॥३॥  
म्हणोनी विस्तार आटोपिला नाहीं। वेदांसी तें नाहीं पुरतें ठावे॥४॥  
नामा म्हणे नामें आठवा अवतार। पूर्ण ब्रह्म साचार कृष्णरुप॥५॥

मध्यें झालें मौन देव निजध्यानीं। बौद्ध ते म्हणोनी नावें रुप॥१॥  
पाखांडें बहुत कालीमार्जी झालीं। वर्णाश्रम सकळीं बुडविले॥२॥  
पापाचिया राशी जळतील नामीं। निश्चय हरिनामीं नामा म्हणे॥३॥

कलीचिये अंतीं होणार कलंकी। मारील म्लेंछ कीं घोड्यावरी॥१॥  
करील धर्माची उभारील गुढी। कृतयुगा प्रौढी करी तोचि॥२॥  
तोंवरी साधन हरिनाम कीर्ति। संतांची संगती नामा म्हणे॥३॥  
(श्री संत नामदेव महाराज यांची अभंगांची गाथा, भाग ५वा)

### 13. श्रीसमर्थ रामदास स्वामीकृत

#### श्रीमनाचे श्लोक

बहू श्रापितां कष्टला अंबऋषी ।  
तयाचें स्वयें श्रीहरी जन्म सोशी ॥  
दिला क्षीरसिंधू तया ऊपमानीं ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 116

विधीकारणें जाहला मत्स्य वेगीं ।  
धरी कूर्मरूपें धरा पृष्ठभागीं ॥  
जना रक्षणाकारणें नीच योनी ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 120

महाभक्त प्रल्हाद हा कष्टवीला ।  
म्हणोनी तयाकारणें सिंह जाला ॥  
न ये ज्वाळा वीशाळ संनीध कोणी ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 121

कृपा भाकिता जाहला वज्रपाणी ।  
तयाकारणें वामनू चक्रपाणी ॥  
द्वीजांकारणें भार्गवू चापपाणी ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 122

अहस्येसतीलागिं आरण्यपंथें ।  
कुडावा पुढें देव बंदीं तयांतें ॥

बळें सोडितां घाव घाली निशाणीं ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा राम दासाभिमानी ॥ 123

तये द्रोपदीकारणें लाग वेगें ।  
त्वरें धांवतो सर्व सांझनि मार्गें ॥  
कळीलागिं जाला असे बौद्ध मौनी ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 124

अनाथां दिनांकारणें जन्मताहे ।  
कलंकी पुढें देव होणार आहे ॥  
जया वर्णितां शीणली वेदवाणी ।  
नुपेक्षी कदा देव भक्ताभिमानी ॥ 125

जनाकारणें देव लीलावतारी ।  
बहूतांपरी आदरें वेषधारी ॥  
तया नेणती ते जन पापरूपी ।  
दुरात्मे महानष्ट चांडाळ पापी ॥ 126

#### 14. मानसोल्लासः

अनेकदेशभाषाभिः स्वरैः पादैश्च तेत्रकाः । (न्नकैः)  
चित्रिको परिकीर्तितः ॥ (:) बहु तालैश्च विचित्र (चित्रको)  
जेणे रसातलउणु मत्सरूपे वेद आणियले मनु शिवकवाणियले  
तो संसारसायनारायणु ॥(खो) मोहं तो राषो(णु)रतातण(ग)  
कूर्मिनागिसन्दरमेवचदेमचेशालां नु  
सुररिगममृतसाधिसि कोटदेवनेपगीगे वरजो सुवररूपे  
पाथालुपैशिदाण तुहरिणकछ पुचमाचषिदाढ गोविन्द  
धरणि उध्दरियम् सौदेउमन्दरदुहोच्छ उपर्चञ्जि श्रीनारसींहदै  
हिरंण्यकशिपुरोस्सुगोह । वशिचवंपे नादैचुटुं मनवलवेंडिका  
निच्यंड मयुवामनु भूफलके त्रिदैत्युबलठिल्लिनि भीमिन्निपुर  
हृदेन्निल्लूकसुधौ मेरस्मदुकारन्  
जे ब्रह्मणेरकुलेउपजीय्या कात्तवीया जेणेबाहु फरसे(य्याजुणे)  
खांडिया परसरा मुदे उतो महामङ्गल करउ ।  
नन्दगोकुलम् । जायौ कन्हु जो गोवीजणे पडिहे  
लीटे नयणें जोविया महणाधर आविनाहमणि हक्कारिया

कन्हौभरडासौ अहर्मोणां चिंतिया देउ । बुध्दरूपे  
 जो दाणवसुरां व डणि वेददूषण(वंच)  
 बोल्लडणि माया मोहिया तो दे उमाङ्गि पासाउ करु ॥  
 कल्किभू (स्तो)खड्गहस्त मारुहय(त्वाश्व)त्वा अश्व(भू)  
 जनसंहरणोद्यतः । निष्कृपणःपाणिः(पाण)कृपणः(निष्कोष)  
 कारुण्यं निःकृ पोऽपिकरोतु मे ॥(ष्कृ)  
 पाठान्येत्(न) वंविधान्य(ने)र प्रतिरागं नियोजयेत् ।  
 स्वरान् वर्ज्यान्परित्यज्य क्षिपेद्रागोचितान्स्वरान् ॥  
 तालान् भिन्नाँस्तथा तत्र न्यसेत्तत्र पदे पदे ।  
 पादाँस्तालानुसारेण तेन्नकान्यतिसंयुतान् ॥  
 एअवं कृत्वा पदन्यासं रागैस्तालैः समन्वितम् ।  
 स्वरैः पादैस्तथा तेन्नैर्गातव्योऽयं विचित्रकः ॥

## 15. संत तुकाराम दशावतार कृती

तुज न भें मी कळिकाळा।  
 मज नामाचा जिव्हाळा॥१॥

माझा बळिया नेणसी कोण।  
 संतां साहय नारायण॥२॥

शंख वधिला सागरीं।  
 वेद घेउनि आला चारी॥३॥

कुर्मै दैत्य वधिला जेठी।  
 हात पाय लपवी पोटीं॥४॥

व(वा)राहरूप धरिलें गाढें।  
 धरा प्रतापें धरिली दाढे॥५॥

हिरण्यकश्यप विदारिला।  
 भक्त प्रल्हाद रक्षिला॥६॥

वामन झाला दीनानाथ।  
 बळी पाताळीं घातला दैत्य॥७॥

छेदुनियां सहस्त्र भुजा।

कामधेनु आणिली वोजा॥८॥

शिळा प्रतापें सागरीं तारी।  
स्थापी बिभीषण रावणा मारी॥९॥

मारोनियां कंसराव।  
पिता सोडविला वसुदेव॥१०॥

पांचाळीसी गांजितां वैरी।  
वस्त्रें आपण झाला हरी॥११॥

गजेंद्र स्मरे राम राम।  
त्यासी पाववी वैकुंठधाम॥१२॥

तुका म्हणे हरिरूप झाले।  
पुन्हां जन्मा नाही आले॥१३॥  
(सार्थ तुकारामाची गाथा)

## सार्थ तुकारामाची गाथा

### मत्स्य

ब्रम्हयाचे वेद शंखासुरें नेले।  
त्यासाठी धरिले मत्स्यरूप॥१॥  
तेणें आत्मा नव्हता नेला ब्रम्हांडासी।  
काय ब्रम्हयासी नव्हते ज्ञान॥२॥  
परि तेणें धावा केला आवडीनें।  
झाले नारायण कृपासिंधु॥३॥  
तुका म्हणे विठोबा मी नामधारक।  
पोसणें सेवक भेटी देई॥४॥

### कूर्म

देवीं आणि दैतीं सिंधु घुसळिला।  
भार पृथ्वीस झाला साहावेना॥१॥  
झालासी कासव धरिली पाठीवरी।  
चिंता तुज हरी सकळांची॥२॥  
तये काळीं देव करिताती स्तुति।

कृपालु श्रीपति म्हणोनियां॥३॥  
तुका म्हणे ऐसे उदंड पवाडे।  
ज्यासी सहस्त्र तोंडें सिणला तोही॥४॥

### सूकर

हिरण्याक्ष दैत्य मातला जे काळीं।  
वरदानें बळी शंकराच्या॥१॥  
इंद्रपदराज्य घेतलें हिरोनी।  
देवा चक्रपाणी म्हणती घांव॥२॥  
तई पांडुरंगा शूकर झालेती।  
तया दैत्यपती मारियेलें॥३॥  
तुका म्हणे ज्यांचीं राज्यें त्यांसी दिलीं।  
ऐसी तूं माउली पांडुरंगा॥४॥

### नृसिंह

प्रल्हादाकारणें नरसिंह झालासी।  
त्याचिया बोलासी सत्य केलें॥१॥  
राम कृष्ण गोविंद नारायण हरि।  
गर्जे राजद्वारीं भक्तराज॥२॥  
विठ्ठल माधव मुकुंद केशव।  
तेणें दैत्यराव दचकला॥३॥  
तुका म्हणे तयाकारणें सगुण।  
भक्ताचें वचन सत्य केलें॥४॥

### वामन

बळी म्हणे आजी दुर्वासया स्वामी।  
मागों नका तुम्ही नारायण॥१॥  
बहुतां प्रयासीं जोडला श्रीहरी।  
बैसविला द्वारीं राखावया॥२॥  
पातला दुर्वास मग हो तेथूनी।  
चिंतातुर मनी उद्वेगला॥३॥  
काय तूं एकाचा आहेसी अंकित।  
होई कृपावंत तुका म्हणे॥४॥

## राम

साही शास्त्रां अति दुरी। तो परमात्मा श्रीहरि। तो दशरथाचे घरीं। क्रीडतो राम॥१॥  
शिवाचें निजध्येय। वाल्मिकाचें निजगुह्य। तो भिल्लटीचीं फळें खाय। श्रीराम  
तो॥२॥

योगियांचे मनीं। नातुडे चिंतनीं। तो वानरांचे कार्नीं। गोष्टी सांगे॥३॥  
चरणें शिळा उध्दरी। नामें गणिका तारी। तो कोळिया घरीं। पाहुणा राम॥४॥  
क्षण एक सुरवरां। नातुडे नमस्कारा। तो रिसां आणि वानरां। क्षेम दे राम॥५॥  
राम सांवळा सगुण। राम योगियांचें ध्यान। राम राजीवलोचन तुका चरण  
वंदितो॥६॥

## कृष्ण

जो का निर्गुण निराकार।  
तेणें धरियेले अवतार॥१॥  
निर्गुण होता तो सगुणासी आला।  
भक्तीसाठीं प्रगटला॥२॥  
जो का त्रिभुवनचाळक।  
तो हा नंदाचा बाळक॥३॥  
सोडविलें वसुदेवदेवकींसी।-  
अवतार धरिला तिचे कुशीं॥४॥  
मारियेला कंसराणा।  
राज्यीं स्थापिलें उग्रसेना॥५॥  
तुका म्हणे देवाधिदेव।  
तो हा उभा पंढरिराव॥६॥

## बुध्द

बौध्य अवतार माझिया अहष्टा।  
मौन्य मुखें निष्ठा धरियेली॥१॥  
लोकांचियेसाठीं शाम चतुर्भुज।  
संतांसवे गुज बोलतसां॥२॥  
आलें कलियुग माझिया संचिता।  
डोळां हाकलितां न पडेसी॥३॥  
म्यांच तुझें काय केलें नारायणा।  
कां नये करूणा तुका म्हणे॥४॥



## कल्कि

कलियुगामाजी थोर झाले बंड।  
नष्ट लोक लंड झाले फार॥१॥  
न धरिती सोय न पुसती कोणा।  
येतें जैसें मना तैसें चाले॥२॥  
सज्जनाचा वारा टेंको नेदी द्वारा।  
ऐसिया पामरा तारी कोण॥३॥  
विश्वास तयाचा बैसेना कोठेही।  
स्तुति निंदा पाहीं जीवीं धरी॥४॥  
तुका म्हणे कैसें केलें नारायणें।  
जाणावें हें कोणें तयाविण॥५॥

## APPENDIX – C

### List of Daśāvatārī Artists

- 1 Śri. Patkar Laxman Gangaram (Kotkamte-8805587808)
- 2 Śri. Ghadi Ekanath Dhapu (Kotkamte- 9404163816)
- 3 Śri. Amberkar Vasudev ( Kotkamte- 9011026499)
- 4 Śri. Morye Shankar Shantaram (Kudal- 9421632489)
- 5 Śri. Morye Prakash (Kudal- 9421632489)
- 6 Śri. Lingayat Pradeep ( Kuveshi- 9273744920)
- 7 Śri. Parab Ganpat Shankar (Malvan- 9922430157/ 24371474)
- 8 Śri. Kandalgaokar Satyavan (Śri Satguru Daśāvatāra Mandal )
- 9 Śri. Padave Mahesh (Śri Bhuteśvar Daśāvatāra Mandal )
- 10 Śri. Hindlekar Narayan (Śri Bhagavati Daśāvatāra Mandal )
- 11 Śri. Hardikar Ravindra Shivaram (Adivare)
- 12 Śri. Bedarkar Dipak (Adivare- 9403062588)
- 13 Śri. Date Savita Jayavanta (Adivare- 02353-226282)
- 14 Śri. Date Jayavanta (Adivare)
- 15 Śri. Ranade Shrikant (Adivare- 02353- 226338)
- 16 Śri. Paranjape Vasudev (Adivare- 02353- 226247)
- 17 Śri. Joshi Suresh (Kuveshi- 02353-224324/ 9226738507)
- 18 Śri. Karandikar, Sagar Joshi (Kuveshi)
- 19 Śri. Kamalakar Prabhu (Banda, Sindhudurg 9423302881 )
- 20 Śmt. Aparna Aglave- Chaitanya Mahila Vikas Mandal (Banda, Sindhudurg 9423513260)

**APPENDIX – D**  
**Features of Daśāvātāra Plays - General Observations**

	Siddhivināyaka Troupe (Mumbai)	Kotakamte Troupe (Sindhudurga Dist.)	Nate village (Ratnagiri Dist.)	Adivare Village (Ratnagiri Dist.)	Kuveshi Village (Sindhudurga Dist.)
Place of Enactment	Auditorium	Auditorium	Temple Premises	Temple Premises	Temple Premises
Time	Evening	Night	Night	Night or Morning	Night
Nature and Function	Aesthetic and Devotional	Aesthetic and Devotional	Ritual and Aesthetic	Ritual and Aesthetic	Ritual and Aesthetic
Make-up	Special make-up for major characters. Head-gear and mask for Śankhāsura and others	Stylized make-up: Head-gear etc.	Stylized make-up: Head-gear and other ornaments.	Stylized make-up: traditional masks.	Stylized make-up: traditional masks.
Costume	Colorful dress. Traditional ornaments (self – made) and Mask for Gaṇapati and	Colorful dress. Traditional ornaments (self – made) and Mask for Gaṇapati.	Colorful dress. Traditional ornaments (self –made) and Mask for Gaṇapati.	Colorful dress. Traditional ornaments (self – made) and Mask for Gaṇapati,	Colorful dress. Traditional ornaments, masks of wood and Paper Mache (self – made). Traditional

	Sarasvati's peacock. Sajjiva <i>āhārya</i> of NŚ.- Garūḍa and Śeṣa			Rāvaṇa and Sarasvati's peacock.	mask for Rāvaṇa
Lighting	Electrical light	Electrical light	Petromax light	Petromax light	Petromax light
Music	Pakhawāja, cymbals, and harmonium	Pakhawāja, cymbals, and harmonium	Pakhawāja, cymbals, and harmonium	Pakhawāja, cymbals, and harmonium	Pakhawāja, cymbals, and harmonium
Performer Training	No special training	No special training	No special training	Systematic training with body exercise	No special training
Transmission of performance knowledge	By oral tradition	By oral tradition	By oral tradition	By oral tradition and written script (Shri Gore and Shri Bhide Mandali)	By oral tradition and written script
Caste of the performers	Any caste. No female performers	Guravas and other castes	Guravas and Devalis	Only Brahmins	Only Brahmins
Occasion of performance	Any time	Any time and some festive occasions in villages (for livelihood)	Festive occasions (Mahāśivarātri and Tripurāri Paurṇimā)	Festive occasions (Navarātri and Tripurāri Paurṇimā). Ten days presentation of all the Avatāras	Festive occasions (Mahāśivarātri and Tripurāri Paurṇimā)

Musical format and language used	All characters use their local language (Malvani and Marathi). Singers follow folk tunes; sometimes classical <i>rāgas</i>	All characters use their local language. Playback singers also take part in the performance. Singers follow only folk tunes and <i>nāṭya-saṅgīta</i>	All characters deliver their dialogue in Marathi. Singers follow only folk tunes	All characters speak Marathi. Some characters sing for themselves. Singers follow classical <i>rāgas</i> and <i>nāṭya-saṅgīta</i> Tunes. Āryā, Caryā, Dīṇḍī, Tarāṇā, Nāṇḍī, and Pada forms were used	All characters speak Marathi. Some characters sing for themselves. Singers follow classical <i>rāgas</i> and <i>nāṭya-saṅgīta</i> Tunes.
Abhinaya	Attempts are made for executing in a stylized manner four modes of Abhinaya. Stress on Vācīkābhīnaya	Attempts are made for executing in a stylized manner four modes of Abhinaya. Stress on Vācīkābhīnaya	Attempts are made for executing in a stylized manner four modes of Abhinaya. Stress on Vācīkābhīnaya	Attempts are made for executing in a stylized manner four modes of Abhinaya. Stress on Vācīkābhīnaya	Attempts are made for executing in a stylized manner four modes of Abhinaya. Stress on Vācīkābhīnaya
Date	06-03-2012 Video- 1	09-02-2012 Video- 2	09-03-2013 Video- 3	10-03-2013	23-11-1993 Video- 4

Themes	Garūḍa Jañma	Kālikā Jañma	Tulaśice Pān	Day-1, Gaṇeśa Pūjā and Matsya, Day-2, Kūrma and Varāha, Day3-4, Narasiṃha, Day-5, Vāmana, Day-6-7, Paraśurāma, Day-8, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Day-9-10, Rāma	Nāndī, Matsya <i>avatāra</i> , Narasiṃha <i>avatāra</i> , Paraśurāma <i>avatāra</i> and Rāma <i>avatāra</i>